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[LIZZIE'S SACRIFICE.]

STRANGELY MARRIED.

BY ERNEST BRENT,

Author of "Strayed Away," "Milly Lee," "John Kendrake's Destiny," &c.

CHAPTER XII.

As a wood-dove, newly shot,
She sobbed and lifted her breast;
She sighed and covered her eyes,
Filling her lips with sighs;
She sighed, she withdrew herself not,
She refrained not, liking not rest.

Swainsbury.

PAUL left the room just as his mother was about to enter, and the proud flush of triumph on his face made her look at him in surprise.

"She has promised me!" he said, and deep emotion made his voice husky. "I knew I had not dreamed and worked in vain."

"Promised what, Paul?"

"To be my wife, my love—my peerless Lizzie is mine for ever!"

The words struck Mrs. Dalrymple with a strange sense of pain, and she entered the apartment wondering. She loved her son too well, perhaps, but the instinct that is woman's own warned her that there were dark and evil passions in his soul.

"This should not be," the lady thought. "I have seen no signs of love in her, no tender sympathy such as should exist for the man to whom she gives herself. There is more in this than I can see."

That last thought deepened when she saw the kneeling figure on the floor, heard the passionate heart-wrung sobs of Lizzie, wrapt in the wild grace of her sorrow. Mrs. Dalrymple, touched at the sight, so pitiful even in its beauty, went and knelt by her side.

"My darling," she said, as tenderly as she would have spoken to her own daughter, "what is the matter?"

Miss Amory would have told her gladly, but there was the remembrance of the peril to Fred. She had seen the menace that lurked under Paul Dalrymple's

beseeching passion. Her love was the price of her brother's safety. Paul would not keep the secret if she refused to be his wife.

"What have you done?" Mrs. Dalrymple asked. "What promise have you made to Paul? He tells me something that I cannot understand."

The sweet blue eyes turned upon her with a wistful look, and the fair face, white with anguish, sought refuge on her breast.

"Do you love him, dear? You may tell me the truth."

She parted the heavy golden tresses with a gentle hand and looked into Lizzie's eyes for an answer; but Lizzie only nestled closer to her and replied by a shivering sigh.

"He has frightened you," said Mrs. Dalrymple. "I must not go out and leave you with him again. I know he loves you passionately—madly; and I do not wonder, for you are very beautiful. But he must not make you give a promise that you might afterwards repent."

"Do not ask me anything," pleaded Lizzie. "I cannot tell you. I only know that I must keep the promise I have made."

"Not if in keeping it you are unhappy."

"Yes," said the plaintive voice; "even if my heart were to break."

"I must speak to Paul," said Mrs. Dalrymple, convinced now that there was some mystery. "Mr. Dacre would think very little of me if I permitted you to be frightened or ensnared into a marriage with my son. How came it that you made such a promise if you are so sorry now?"

"Don't ask me, please. I did make it, and it must be kept."

"Is it that you love Paul, and are only agitated because of some promise made to another? I have heard that you were engaged—Mr. Dacre told me—to young Mr. Lenmore—John Lenmore of Glen Farm."

The poor girl clasped her hands in frenzied anguish at the mention of that name. Mrs. Dalrymple, pitying her distress, would have pressed her to rest.

veal the cause, but a gentle tapping at the door called her attention.

Not wishing to let anyone see Miss Amory in tears, she went to the door.

Paul was there. He drew her out in silence and shut Lizzie in.

"Mother," he said, in a low, deep tone, "what are you doing there?"

"My duty, Paul," was the calm reply. "Dear as you are to me, I would not see you do this great wrong to that poor child. How have you induced her to make you such a promise? She does not love you."

They had entered the long dim library by this time and were alone, out of hearing. There was no danger of interruption, yet he spoke under his breath.

"But she will," he said. "Would you tell me that it is not within the power of a passion like mine to wake a kindred feeling in the heart mine pants for?"

"Speak more calmly, Paul. There is a strange, suppressed excitement in your manner that I do not like. You had more self-control before you went abroad."

The words silenced him very suddenly; a slight shudder ran through him.

"I confess," the lady went on, taking his feverish hand, "that your behaviour is altogether inexplicable to me. You know our purpose in coming here?"

"Yes."

"It was that you were to cultivate the acquaintance of the Dacres and try to win Mildred, and I am sure she would have suited you better than Miss Amory ever will. Her nature is firmer, stronger; she has more faith, more depth, more passion; and she is Mr. Dacre's chief heiress."

"Pardon me, there; she will share equally with Lizzie."

"That is, if Lizzie marries in accordance with her guardian's wish; and the instinct that has never failed me yet warns me that he does not like you."

"Why do you think that?"

10 AU 70
MUSEUM

"I have tried him—spoken of you, and watched him closely while he has given a reply. I have watched him, too, when you have been with us, and I have seen him look at you with a curious, dangerous doubt. Mark me, Paul, you are no favourite of his."

"But if I can prove that Lizzie marries me of her free choice, he will give way, mother, and I shall win his confidence before long."

Mrs. Dalrymple shook her head gravely in doubt. "Whether I do or not," he said, "does not matter now. We are rich enough without Thorpendean, though that shall be ours too. Thorpendean and wealth for you, mother—Lizzie for me—for me!"

"Her heart is far away from you, my son. You had better give her up; no matter by what power or persuasion you won that promise, you had better release her from it."

His massive chest heaved and fell slowly with the intensity of his determination.

"Never! never! I would give my soul for her! Did you love my father?"

Mrs. Dalrymple trembled at the recollections the question evoked.

"Did I love him? too well, perhaps; better, I fear, than I loved aught else on earth or in heaven."

"And so I love her," he said, quietly. "I would be a tiger to win her; a dove if she were mine; and even if I would give her up, I dare not."

"Why?"

"She is my safety; and now ask me no more, for you touch on the verge of the secret that gained me her promise. Do not fear for her, mother. I will be as gentle as a child to her; if strong and deep and tireless devotion can make her happy, hers will be true happiness."

Mrs. Dalrymple said no more, but remained unsatisfied. She would have told him that love like his was more likely to grow wearisome than to win a return.

"There is nothing so sweet as the affection we crave for," she said to herself; "but to have it forced upon us while every sense yearns for another, is the bitterest thing on earth."

And she was right.

"We will be married here," said Paul, breaking the brief silence, "before Lizzie returns home. She must not have time to change her mind, or be persuaded out of her promise."

"It would be best to give her time to think of it."

"And lose her. No; I tell you, mother, that my soul is set upon that promise, and my life depends on its fulfilment. So urge me no more, but help me, mother. Keep Lizzie here, and teach her to think kindly of me; reconcile her to her destiny."

He took both her hands and looked into her face with the beseeching eyes that had won his every request since the days of his infancy. Unable to resist his pleading, she pressed a kiss on his brow.

"For you, my son," she said, "I would do anything."

"Thorpendean will yet be ours," he said, dreamily. "The barriers now are few. Mr. Dacre, Mildred—"

"And Frederick—you forget him?"

"He will never return."

"Never!" she repeated, impressed by his tone; "but when he has found this Mr. Bryant, then—"

"Then—that will be never, I fear."

"There is something hidden in this," she said, wistfully; "you give me a vague fear."

"Dismiss it," and he kissed her. "If there is something hidden, I keep it hidden for Fred's sake. I like the poor fellow in spite of his faults; and in case he ever should come back, I should not like to expose him to Mr. Dacre's anger."

Mrs. Dalrymple was content with that. Perhaps she thought it best to be content lest she should hear too much, and have the vague horror she feared brought into palpable shape before her eyes.

"Thorpendean may yet be ours," she said, "and by a way you have not thought of."

Paul regarded her inquiringly. Her face wore that light fresh flush of a woman conscious of her beauty's power to the last.

"How, mother?"

"I have not seen Mr. Dacre many times, and he has already begun to speak of his loneliness. 'When my children are married,' he said to me, 'they will find other homes, and other cares will take them from me. It is but natural. We ought to think of this before we grow too old—before it is too late.'"

"And what did you say?"

"Nothing. I sighed as if I sympathised with his thought, as I did. Such a man is to be won slowly."

"Would you like to win him?" asked Paul, eagerly.

"Yes; he is rich, handsome still, and he is a man of genius, not unlike his cousin Godfrey, your father; and if I were his wife, Paul, you would be master of Thorpendean."

"Do it," said Paul, clasping her hand. "Win him, mother, for you are beautiful still, and can charm him easily. I see it is not alone in youth that passion burns."

"We like to be loved, Paul, even when we are gray, by those whose age is kindred with our own. Our children part with us as easily as we parted with our parents, and we cannot expect that it should be otherwise."

Paul shook his head.

"There is no one in the world so dear to me as you."

"Ah," she said, with a tender smile, "you think so now; but if you marry Lizzie Amory!"

"If?"

"Well, then, when you marry her."

"My love for her is a burning, stateless passion that never can be quenched till she is mine. For you I have a deep and tranquil feeling that can never change. You think of me always, and of me only as your son; but the best and truest wife that ever lived may let thought and fancy go astray sometimes."

As if his words had touched a recollection better left alone, her face grew crimson. He did not notice it—he was thinking of Lizzie, not looking at Mrs. Dalrymple.

"Some early infatuation," he went on, "or one met too late, as it will be with my own glorious girl, till my heart, growing to hers, drives out all memory of this dull plodder, this clod who dared to think she might be his."

"Believe me, Paul," she said very gravely, "an old love is a dangerous thing to a husband's peace—it is never forgotten."

His brow clouded. At first he had found a pleasure in the thought of being John Lenmore's successful rival. Now he began to wish that Lizzie had never cared for another. The knowledge that she would be but a reluctant sacrifice to him, while John Lenmore had the entire worship of her soul, was a drop of venom in the cup of his happiness.

"Keep her with you," he said, as he rung for his travelling-cap and rug. "Teach her to care for me, mother, if you can, and do not forget Mr. Dacre. If you bring him to your feet it will be my salvation—no matter what may come."

"Where are you going now?"

"To London."

"For what?"

"A special licence and a clergyman. We must keep our marriage secret for a time; it will be best."

"Why?"

"Lizzie will be here with me under this roof—your guest, my wife," he thrilled in every fibre at the thought—"and once my wife for a week, a day, not even Mr. Dacre, with his iron nerve and indomitable will, can take her from me."

"He will be very angry."

Paul laughed.

"Charm his anger away. I saw how he admired you even at the first meeting, and I thought then there might be more than one way of making Thorpendean ours."

He went out, and was soon on his way to London. Mrs. Dalrymple returned to Lizzie. The girl was calmer now and more resigned. Her mind was made up for the sacrifice, and there was no hostile presence to save her. A little more persuasion on Mrs. Dalrymple's part might have won from her the secret that she found so hard to keep, but that little persuasion was not given; every other consideration was lost in the one that Paul's happiness and safety were only to be obtained by the marriage.

"You are better now, darling," she said, gently.

"Yes," said the low sad voice, in reply; "I have been very weak to give way so; but you see it came upon me so suddenly, and your son is so passionate, so impetuous."

"Only in his love for you, my child. I never thought he could worship any one as he does you. He has been faithful all these years—lived with scarcely a hope."

"I know, I know."

"Poor plaintive pet," said Mrs. Dalrymple, with a caressing hand on Lizzie's brow, "one would not think it such a sad matter to be loved as it seems with you."

Conscious of the strong necessity there was for keeping Fred's story and secret from every one, Lizzie tried to smile, but it was a faint attempt—more pathetic, by far, than tears or sorrowful words.

Mrs. Dalrymple talked to her of Paul, touched upon the points in his nature she thought Miss Amory might most admire; his frank and fearless boyhood; his generosity and courage as a man; his fidelity to those he loved; and his slow, terrible vindictiveness to those he hated. She did not conceal his faults; but all his faults were great ones;

he had no mean and petty vices; in good or in evil he outdid the doings of other men.

Paul was away three days, and during his absence Lizzie grew calm; more reconciled to the fate she had accepted; yet she shuddered when the footsteps of her lover sounded in the hall.

He had not come alone; there was with him a young, pensive-looking gentleman, whom he introduced as the Reverend Mr. Sedley, and whose purpose there Lizzie divined too well.

"I have told him that Lizzie is an orphan," Paul whispered in his mother's ear; "and that we are married privately by her wish." Do not let him think otherwise.

Even as he spoke Lizzie turned her statuesque face upon him in one mute, appealing gaze, but a look of passionate love was his only reply. Mr. Sedley being a very simple-minded man, mistook the mute appeal of that gaze for intense affection.

"Will you keep your promise now?" asked Paul, bending over the chair in which Lizzie sat like one in a dream. "Come, smile just once to tell me you are not unhappy."

The very mockery of the request forced a bitter smile to her lips, and she rose with a shivering sigh, as a vial preparing for sacrifice might have done; she gave him her hand and said:

"I am ready."

Of the rest she was but dimly conscious; she saw as in a dream the young clergyman before an open Bible and with a prayer-book in his hand. She knew that he put questions to her which she answered mechanically, that she signed some papers, and that two servants, of whose presence she was scarcely aware, were there.

One thing she did that startled all. When the service was over and the nuptial benediction was pronounced, Mr. Sedley was about to close the Bible, but Lizzie prevented him. She forced Paul Dalrymple's hand down upon the open leaves and held it there with her own.

"Perfect your vow now," she said, in a low voice, that thrilled every listener through. "I have kept mine, swear to keep yours."

Paul Dalrymple bent low, though his lips grew white and pallid, and faltered as they touched her hand.

"I swear!" he said. "I would swear anything and keep my vow now that you are mine for ever."

Lizzie turned to Mrs. Dalrymple, and a look expressed her wish; it was to be taken away that she might be alone; and Paul's mother obeyed it. Lizzie did not appear to realise the truth. She was the wife of Paul Dalrymple—she for whom John Lenmore was waiting with such patient fidelity, had set the seal upon his hope and her own future.

"I want you to take me home now," she said to Mrs. Dalrymple; "I have kept my promise and can do no more. I cannot bear to see him."

"You forget, my child," said Mrs. Dalrymple, gravely. "You can neither judge nor act for yourself in future now. When you give yourself to a man to be his wife you are his soul and body, there is no escape, no return; it is a very solemn thing to do."

"So I begin to feel," said the poor girl, with a depth of hopeless misery in her tone. "I wish I could die."

"Poor child! I wish you had told me the whole truth; I would have saved you even from my son. It is too late now."

"Too late!" repeated Lizzie. "Yes, it is too late! Too late! And what will John Lenmore say? I never loved him so much as now. Would that he were here to take me away."

"Hush, hush! my darling."

"I want to go home," she pleaded, in childish entreaty, while her large eyes filled with tears. "You will not let him keep me here, will you?"

"What can I do, my child? You have made him master of your fate, and would it be wise for you to go home while you are so pale and agitated? Would not Mr. Dacre suspect something?"

The strong suppressed excitement that had sustained Lizzie so far began to give way now, and with it her strength failed. She had not slept an hour since Paul went to London, and now she lay in Mrs. Dalrymple's arms looking wearily at the plain gold ring he had placed on her finger. She slept soon, but not a happy sleep; little sobs of pain quivered up from her heart, and tears trembled on the silken fringe of her eyelids. The sacrifice had truly been a sad one.

Paul came in while she slumbered. He stole in on tiptoe, and lifting one hand gently, knelt and gazed at her with a long, adoring gaze; he would have given worlds to have seen the beauty of her face less plaintive.

"Mine—mine for ever!" he whispered; "but oh, mother, shall I ever win her love?"

CHAPTER XIII.

The gods give thee fair wage and dues of death!
 Me fair days and ways to come at thee!

Atlanta in Calypdo.

THE same train that brought Paul Dalrymple and his clerical companion to the station nearest his home carried a rather curious passenger, a very powerfully-built, sinewy man, with large features, very strongly marked.

His manners were decidedly of the free-and-easy order, for he had thrown himself full length on the cushions of a seat in a first-class compartment, and with his heels elevated on an arm-rest at one end and his head propped up against the arm-rest at the other end, he smoked away in cheerful defiance of guards, porters, station-masters, and regulations.

He had plenty of money, handfuls of loose gold in the huge side-pockets of his trousers. He had plenty of tobacco—thick black coils of it, strongly scented—and he was civil enough to offer it to his travelling companions, who, not to be outdone in civility, declined it with all promptitude.

"I was raised down east, I was," he began, growing suddenly communicative for the benefit of his remaining fellow-travellers—a resolute old gentleman who would not be smoked out, and a quiet young one who was evidently amused—"and we don't have this kind of locomotive there."

"Indeed."

"Oh, yes, you know, we do things in a big way there. None of these fellows worrying a citizen at every sentry-box to show his ticket and tell him not to smoke. No, we've bigger things in hand, we have. When a man starts they let him alone to the end of his journey, they do."

"It is a difference of custom, my friend."

"Just so, stranger, just so. That's the most sensible remark I've heard this 'ere side of the ocean, and somehow I think we have the biggest side of the Atlantic our way. But it's a difference of custom, as you say; but to a man who likes to take things easy and go ahead your customs are not to be feared."

"Habit is a great civiliser," said the quiet young gentleman, wondering what "tochre" might be meant to express.

The gentleman who was raised down east swung his long legs to the floor, putting the old gentleman's knees in imminent jeopardy by so doing, and sitting upright stared hard at the last speaker.

"How do you mean that there remark, stranger?"

"Diplomatically, of course," smiled the other. "The barbarian is only a barbarian to us; we are barbarians to him."

"Just so, just so. That there's my opinion; that is to be feared. I've travelled a long way, stranger, and I've met every kind, but I like you best, as yet."

"Thanks."

"Where you raised in these parts?"

"Not far from here. Thorpendean is my native place."

"Yes," said the gentleman from down east, and he prolonged the word into two respectable syllables. "You ain't all English, air you?"

"Thoroughly as English as the soil of my father's land."

"Well, now, that's a most a pity. You're too good for the old dominion, you are. You ain't a preacher?"

"No, I am not a preacher."

"No," repeated the stranger, "didn't think you were. Now I tell you what I am. I'm down east, but I ain't been down east since I was no bigger than that."

He put his hand about six inches from the floor, and the gentleman who was not a preacher thought he must have retired from down east at a very early period of his existence.

"Since then," he went on, "I've been colonial. I made a tolerable heap of dollars one way and other, and once I took a spell of rest, but it nearly killed me. I'm an old horse now, stranger, and, believe me, rest ain't good when you've been used to harness, and you go to stable with nothing to do but keep your nose in the manger and then look out for the pole-axe. That's a mighty pretty illustration, too; but I'm gifted that way, I am."

"The metaphor was good. You wanted to see the old country, I suppose."

"Some. Nat Harperley ain't the man, though, to travel without having his expenses paid; and I'm on business, I am. I have a friend in these parts."

"Have you?"

"Paul Dalrymple, he's given his name as, and a nice bit of work I've had to find him. Your name ain't Paul Dalrymple, is it?"

"It is not."

"What might it be? We've talked a long time, and you know all about me, but you are mighty close."

"It might be anything, my friend. It is John Lenmore."

"Now that's a good name," said Mr. Nat Harperley, shaking hands with him on the strength of it, "and it came from the other side of the Atlantic."

"Yes, my friend; but do not forget that it originated here."

"I believe a Britisher would claim the invention of the moon if he could," grumbled Mr. Harperley.

"You don't happen to know Paul Dalrymple, Esquire—do you?"

"I do."

"He ain't a friend of yours?"

"Most emphatically he is not."

"Nothing to say agin him, stranger—seeing as he's a friend of mine."

"Nothing to say for or against him. I know him merely by repute."

"I know him by observation," said Mr. Harperley, as the train stopped; "and if there's to be in him he'll remember me. Good-bye, stranger—but, hi!—just a moment; you don't happen to know Squire Amory, do you?"

"There is no such person. Mr. Frederick Amory is abroad. He has a sister whose guardian is Mr. Dacre, of Thorpendean House. Why do you ask?"

"Mr. Frederick Amory is abroad, is he?" said Mr. Harperley, who had a peculiar habit of accentuating the first syllable of every word that impressed or amused him. "Well, that's all, stranger. I've seen him at my store, that's all! when I had a shanty by the river Pentolina. That's all!—and it ain't much neither! Good-bye."

"Good day," said John Lenmore, courteously, and he watched the down-easter with singular interest as he left the platform.

The train was still in the station. John Lenmore went along and looked into every carriage. He paused at one—a second class—containing four farmers, two gentlemanly fellows, and a threadbare, retiring man, who sat in the corner.

To this man who sat in the corner, John Lenmore beckoned. He left his corner, and swung himself on to the platform just as the train began to move.

"Anything particular?" he said, in a low voice. "Quick; I can't stop the train long, and there's a pretty case inside—two of the oldest card-sharpers we have."

"Let them go, Falcon. I have better work for you."

By some mysterious agency the train had come to a standstill as soon as the threadbare man left his carriage. Now, at an almost imperceptible signal from him it went on again.

"How did you happen to catch sight of me, Mr. Lenmore?"

"I saw you get in at the London station, and suspected what you were doing. Our bucolic friends must look after their own interests. I want you in a matter that may involve more than one life."

Falcon's eyes lighted up. He was one of the finest detectives in Europe, and John Lenmore had become acquainted with him and many others in the course of his professional career.

"I want you to watch and follow a man who came down by this train," said Lenmore. "You can't mistake him. He is over six feet in height, ungainly and powerfully built; has a narrow brow, and no whiskers or moustache. He wears a white silk scarf round a black broad-rimmed wide-awake, colonial fashion; and he is going to see a Mr. Paul Dalrymple, at a house called The Croft. I will show you where it is."

Falcon nodded.

"What is the game?"

"A mysterious case at present; and this Nat Harperley is, I think, an important player in it. You must make his acquaintance, if possible. It will not be difficult; he is fond of 'liquoring up,' as he terms it."

"Good. Is he simple?"

"No—the reverse; communicative on some points, impenetrable on others. I would not put him into the hands of a man less skillful than yourself."

Flattery, combined with liberal payment, is always welcome. Mr. Falcon was not insensible to its pleasures.

"What is my cue?" he asked, briefly.

"Colonial matters—the names of Bryant, Paul Dalrymple, and Frederick Amory—the River Pentolina. Mark this: two men have disappeared, Amory and Bryant; the sum of one hundred and sixty thousand pounds—chiefly in gold—has disappeared with them!"

"What a case!" said the detective, reflectively.

"But of course you have not started it with me?"

"No; several of your best men are out working it now; but if you are careful, it is very likely this Harperley will throw it entirely into your hands."

Falcon was on the alert then; it was *esprit de corps*—the wish to do something more than his fellows had done, and not rivalry, that made him anxious to be first in the race.

"It would be better," he suggested, "if you were to tell me the whole matter—every detail."

"Attend to this man, Falcon, and you will be able to tell me more than I can tell you."

"Where shall I send to you?"

"At my chambers. Should you ever have to come this way, you can make a confidant of Mr. Dacre, at Thorpendean Lodge. This is a retainer; and now to work."

He put a ten-pound note into Falcon's hand, and they parted, Falcon to follow the down-easter, and John Lenmore to see his friends at home, before he went to the Lodge, where he thought he was sure to find Lizzie.

Mr. Harperley, by dint of persistent questioning and bribing small boys to show him the way, reached The Croft at nightfall. He took a complete survey of the house, to begin with, noted the quiet luxury of its appearance, and thought what a good thing it was to be on friendly terms with its owner.

"Paul Dalrymple, Esquire, has to be in him," he cogitated. "I reckon he knows how to box himself up comfortably; I like him—I do—don't I—oh, yes?"

He made an attempt to perform a flourish with the knocker, but failing at the outset, gave four distinct ponderous single blows, that brought a footman in plain livery to the door, in a state of astonishment. He looked in complete bewilderment at the tall, quaint figure towering above him by half-a-head.

"I'm Nathaniel Harperley, I am," said our friend, quietly, "and I want Paul Dalrymple, Esquire, I do, so just go and tell him."

"Now, sir, your business," said a stern voice.

He turned slowly.

Paul Dalrymple, in the faultless evening dress of an English gentleman, stood before him.

"I'm Nat Harperley, I am," he began.

"So my servant informed me."

"I'm a colonial, though I was raised down east."

"Well—well—"

"Mighty hurry you air in, Paul Dalrymple, Esquire," said Harperley, with exasperating deliberation. "I kept a store on the banks of the Pentolina, I did, and I thought you might like to hear what became of a gentleman as fell out of a canoe, once upon a time, perhaps. Would you?"

Something that Paul muttered fiercely under his breath, and a certain savage gleam in his black eyes, made the down-easter move back half a step; but with his hand in the loose pocket of his coat.

"Thought you'd know to be," he said, with a low laugh; "I knew I'd hit business then. Came a long way to see you, I have, and you might make a fellow more welcome; I should—you'd better."

Mrs. Dalrymple crossed the hall just then, and stopped in wonder to see her son in converse with such an uncouth figure.

"An old colonial friend," said Paul, turning to her with a smile. "A good, honest fellow, to whom I am much indebted. Come in, Harperley, you are sure of a welcome now."

Mrs. Dalrymple met him as gracefully as she could, but it was impossible to touch that large, brown, tobacco-stained hand.

"Don't wonder at it, madam," he said, dropping the objectionable member; "I've seen a bear's foot on a tuft of lilies, and that's just what it would be like shaking hands with you, unless you will like me better when you know me."

Paul led him into the library; it ran right through the house, with windows back and front, and at one end there was a recess curtained off for reading. Paul closed the window, and drew the curtains close; there was a strange quietude in all he did and all he said.

"Take a seat, Mr. Harperley," he said, as courteously as if inviting an honoured guest. "You must be fatigued by your long journey."

"Tochre," thought the intruder. "There's a rattle in that, and the snake bite ain't far behind. Look out, Nat, old hoss, you are in for it if you once get off the tracks."

(To be continued.)

THE HOUSE OF LORDS AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.—The two house competed at Hurlingham recently with most remarkable results. The match was between eleven Peers and the same number of the House of Commons. The conditions were five birds each at 25 yards' rise. Previous to the commencement of the contest 6 to 4 was freely offered on the Peers, but at the end of the first round the Commons were three ahead. This put such confidence into the backers of the Lower House that 3 to 1 went begging. These were, however, destined to be lowered, for in the second round, at the longer distance, the Upper House had made up their loss-way, and finished one bird ahead. From this point one of the finest contests ever witnessed ensued, each side alternately leading by

a bird, amidst the loud plaudits of the partisans of both, until when all the required number of birds had been shot at it was declared a tie, although it was at first announced from the official table that the Commons were one bird ahead. It was then decided that they should shoot off one bird at each range, and, singular to relate, it again ended in a tie. After a consultation it was agreed that another round should be had at the 30 yards' rise, and this time the Peers came off victorious by one bird, killing 85 to their opponents' 84. Besides the honour of winning, there is each year a handsome cup presented to the highest aggregate scorer, and for this the Marquis of Huntly and Lord Willoughby de Broke tied, each scoring nine in the actual contest; and after the ties for the match had been shot off they decided to compete for the holdership, bird for bird, at 50 yards' rise. The marquis shot first and missed; Lord Willoughby followed suit. Again the marquis missed, as did also Lord Willoughby. In the next round both killed; but in the fourth Lord Huntly let his bird escape, and Lord Willoughby, bringing down his bird in fine style, had the satisfaction of carrying off the trophy.

SCIENCE.

An experiment with gun-cotton was made at Rye upon the martello tower, No. 36. This tower, the walls of which were 12 feet thick at the base, was entirely and safely demolished by 200lb. of gun-cotton, divided into three charges and fired simultaneously by electricity. The gun-cotton was in five-inch discs; and none of the debris, not even in single bricks, were blown away to the extent of fifty yards from the building.

METEOROLOGICAL.—Professor H. H. Hildebrandson, of the University of Upsal, in Sweden, has prepared four synoptical meteorological maps, which contain several features of scientific interest. It is generally known that a fall of the barometer is usually followed by an increase of heat, and *vice versa*. But in Sweden, from observations taken from Lapland to Upsal, the barometer and thermometer frequently show results quite contrary to the general experience of more southern latitudes; the barometer often falls considerably, while during the long winter nights of this region the thermometer generally remains stationary, and when storms are prevalent invariably falls along with the barometer. Experience shows that in those regions an intimate relation exists, not only between the variations of the pressure of the atmosphere and those of the direction of the wind, but also between the movements of the barometer and thermometer during serious atmospheric perturbations. The dampness of the atmosphere being much greater in the south-east part of the territory visited by a violent storm than at the opposite extremity, it is easy to conceive that the atmospheres at those two points possess entirely different qualities, analogous, in some degree, to those of the equatorial and polar currents.

ADJUSTMENT OF IRON SHIPS' COMPASSES.—The Board of Trade has recently instituted an honorary examination in deviation and adjustment of iron ships' compasses. After communication with the Local Marine Board, Mr. J. T. Towson, the examiner in navigation in Liverpool, has been appointed as examiner in compass deviation; and a syllabus of examination has been drawn up by Mr. Towson for use there. The examination fee is 2*l.*—a sum which, it is thought, may deter many masters, desiring to show their competency, from coming up for examination, notwithstanding the temptation of the endorsement upon their certificates if successful. The Board of Trade, in a circular issued in May last, give the credit of calling their attention to this subject to Mr. Laurie, a shipbuilder of Glasgow. Mr. Laurie's communication was made in December, 1869, but years previously the Liverpool Compass Committee had addressed the board upon the importance of instructing masters and mates in the elements of magnetism, and actually suggested the examination which has now been instituted, and so far back as 1857 the Astronomer Royal wrote a letter to the board with the view of urging what has now been accomplished. The successful candidate at the first examination is Lieutenant S. T. S. Lecky, R.N.R., who not long since, in consideration of his scientific attainments, was elected a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.

PATENT FOR A COLD TINNING PROCESS.—M. Daubé, iron-master, Blanc Murger Works, at Bellefontaine, in the Vosges, obtained in November last a patent for tinning by a cold process, in order to prevent oxidation of iron in general, and especially of iron wire, employed in the fabrication of cards and wire cloth, without altering its polish or rigidity. An addition to the patent was made on the 30th December. The inventor's chief object is to prevent the softening of the metal, and the mode

adopted is successive immersion in baths containing cold solutions of salts of tin, with the addition of a certain amount of organic matter, such as fecula or starch, which has always been found valuable both in tinning and galvanisation. The solution patented is composed as follows:—To every twenty gallons of water add 6lb. of rye flour, and let it boil for about half an hour; filter it, and afterwards add 212lb. of pyrophosphate of soda, 34lb. of crystallised salt of tin, 134lb. of neutral protochloride of tin, and from 3oz. to 4oz. of sulphuric acid. When the salts are dissolved the solution is distributed into eight or ten wooden vats, a little additional water being added to the first two or three of the vats. The wire is passed successively through the whole of the vats, and if great brilliancy of surface is required, also through draw plates at intervals, and the wire, while retaining all its rigidity, becomes covered with a brilliantly polished coat of tin. Beautiful and inoxidisable cards and wire cloth have been produced by this process, which is applicable to wire for a hundred different purposes. Mr. Daubé, we are told, has also succeeded in silvering iron wire, by using, in place of the salts of tin in the solution, cyanide of silver and cyanide of potassium.

PRESERVATION OF CAST-IRON WATER-PIPES.

EVERY pipe and casting must be entirely free from dust, sand, or rust, when the varnish is applied.

The varnish or pitch is to be made from coal tar, distilled until all the naphtha is removed, the material deodorised, and the pitch reduced to about the consistency of wax or very thick molasses; pitch which becomes hard and brittle when cold will not answer for this use.

Pitch of the proper quality having been obtained, it must be heated in a suitable vessel, to a temperature of three hundred degrees Fahrenheit, and must be maintained at not less than that temperature during the dipping. As the material will deteriorate after a number of pipes have been dipped, fresh pitch must be frequently added, and at least eight per cent. of heavy linseed oil must be added daily with the fresh pitch, and the vessel must be entirely emptied of the pitch and refilled with fresh material as often as may be necessary to insure the perfection of the process.

Each casting should be kept immersed from thirty to forty-five minutes, or until it attains the temperature of three hundred degrees Fahrenheit, and, if required by the engineer, should be heated to such temperature as he may designate before it is dipped.

After the bath is completed, the castings to be removed and placed in such a position to drip that the thickness of the varnish shall be uniform.

The coating on the pipes and castings must be tenacious when cold, and not brittle, nor disposed to scale off, and if it should appear to the inspector that the coating has not been satisfactorily applied, the pipe or casting should be thoroughly scraped, cleaned, and re-coated.

THE WOLSEY CHAPEL AT WINDSOR.—The works undertaken by the Baron de Triqueti, at the command of the Queen, in the Wolsey Chapel, at Windsor, are now far advanced. The walls, right and left, are filled with marbles, and only the east end, where the baron intends to concentrate all the force of colour at his disposal, is vacant. At a sufficient distance from the ground to admit of seats being fixed beneath them range, panelled on either side, a series of scriptural subjects selected by the artist as illustrative of the acts and virtues of the late Prince Consort. In reference, for instance, to the interest taken by the prince in the matter of popular education, we have Jehosaphat directing the teaching of the people by the princes, priests, and Levites. These pictures are executed in inlaid marbles and lithographic stone, which affords a very valuable tone for decorative purposes. The cartoons for them, on completion, are transferred to the marbles, which are then deeply etched, and the lines filled in with a composition (unlike the mastic previously used) as durable as marble itself. Each picture is bedded in a deep-toned marble framework, inlaid with floral designs, and enriched by small reliefs in white, and by medallions in red marble of the obverse and reverse of the coins of the year in which the event depicted happened. For instance, beneath the "The Agony in the Garden" the obverse and reverse of the coin of Tiberius occur. Derbyshire spars employed occasionally in this portion of the work impart an unlooked-for brilliancy to the whole. White marble medallions of the children of the Queen and Prince, executed by Miss Durant, are introduced above each picture, and separating each, but embedded in the same decorative frame, come reliefs of the various virtues. The artist who undertakes memorial work, even under the most favourable circumstances, generally runs hazardous risks. M. de Triqueti has fulfilled

his difficult task with equal fidelity and taste. The subjects treated are of general interest, though susceptible of special application by those deeply concerned. The compositions which make the least pretension to pictorial effect have been the most efficiently rendered in the sober scale of tints afforded by the materials employed. In such materials a blaze of colour is impossible, but a vast variety of delicate and subtle harmonies lie within reach, especially adapted for rendering serious monumental design. Though at present lamentably disturbed by the garish print and gilding of the ceiling and the equally garish glass of the windows, the general effect of the marbles promises to be rich and harmonious. The execution by one man of a scheme demanding such varied attainments must necessarily leave something to be desired, however versatile his powers. The drawing can hardly be characterised as thorough, and has probably suffered much in the process of transferring the cartoons to marble. But whatever may be lacking, the work of the Baron de Triqueti is conceived in the spirit of a genuine artist without reference to profit or applause. What has been done at Windsor has been achieved by legitimate methods, and the completion of this memorial work will be the inauguration of a new and valuable idea in the world of decorative art.

THE CONCEALMENT OF WEALTH.

We are assured that diamonds have of late shown a tendency to rise in value, have indeed risen within the last six or eight months from 7 to 8 per cent. The fact is remarkable, as diamonds, owing to the cosmopolitan character of the demand for them, are comparatively independent of the caprices of fashion, and have had for years almost as fixed a value as gold or silver. Their price has increased indeed, but not in sudden rushes. Newspaper readers are sometimes startled or amused by narratives of new discoveries of diamond mines in Australia, or the Cape, or Lower California; [why does not somebody spend a thousand or two in a geological investigation of Golconda, a district never scientifically searched?] or by stories of some chemist who has made diamonds, and will speedily flood the market; but dealers, we suspect, are very little affected by such rumours.

Diamonds are pretty things, let philosophers say what they will, eternal dewdrops being necessarily as pretty as dewdrops which last a minute; but the desire for them is no more a taste—as the desire for china, for example, is—than the desire for gold, and fluctuates just as little. They excite at once the passion for value and the love of rarity. The trade, though apt, like the trade in bullion, to concentrate itself in few hands, is a large one; and the supply, we expect, without exactly knowing, begins to fail to keep pace with the demand. Diamonds do not wear out, but every year more and more people want them. If that is the case, if demand and supply have just become unequal, the price may continue to advance, and within a very few years reach a figure which may make the little jewels rank among the best of interest-bearing investments. Such an occurrence seems odd to men who cannot perceive the charm of precious stones; but it is not more odd than the duration of the taste for this particular stone, which has outlasted not only fashions but civilisations, and shows no sign of diminution, or than the undoubted and extraordinary rise in the price of all articles of useless or artistic luxury. Pictures, gems, china, bronzes, bric à brac of every sort, rare shawls, rare engravings, and even rare fruits, flowers, and dogs, are as steadily tending upwards in value as if their price depended on a want, and not a caprice. It is the most curious illustration of the unchangeableness of the changeable, of the law which governs even caprices, that we are acquainted with, and tends to indicate that the desire for the rare—which we all notice and smile at in bibliopoles, antiquarians, ontomologists, and every variety of the genus collector—is not an exceptional eccentricity, but a permanent attribute of the human mind, though only noticed in those who have wealth to indulge it in some unusual or splendid form. It is like the desire of accumulation, one of the passions, and not one of the mere tastes of men; and may be relied on in business almost as certainly as self-interest, vanity, or ambition.

At Fontainebleau, recently, 200 acres of forest were destroyed by fire.

We understand that the Commissioners for the International Exhibition of 1871, have adopted the report of the committee recommending that the judges for the admission of pictures shall be three laymen and six artists, and that the Royal Academy, the Society of British Artists, the old Water-colour Society, and the Institute of Painters in Water-colours, have each been invited to name one artist, the remaining two being elected by the whole committee.



[COUSINS, BUT STRANGERS.]

REGINALD WARNER.

CHAPTER V:

At the close of a bright afternoon in the month of June, 1867, just five-and-twenty years from the date of the opening of our story, a handsome young Englishman was among the passengers who got out of a long train in the Northern railroad station, Paris, a busy throng of pleasure-seekers attracted by the opening of the great Exposition.

Vivian Warner—for that was the as yet undisputed name he bore—stood on the threshold of manhood, a superb specimen of his race. He was the image of Reginald Warner at the same period of life, and had nothing of the sinister expression which vice had stamped upon the face of Ralph.

For his education, physical and mental culture, had gone hand in hand. He was none the less brilliant scholar because he was the stroke oar of an Oxford boat-club, and one of the most daring riders in all Yorkshire.

Frank, manly, and pure-hearted, with none of the shame-faced reserve which makes most young Englishmen so difficult of access, Reginald Warner had sent him to the continent to travel alone, without any fear of danger to his morals, for Vivian shrank instinctively from everything impure with the delicacy of a woman.

Well-dressed, amply supplied with funds and letters of credit, well informed, and full of spirits, he launched forth into the foreign world determined to see and enjoy as only youth can.

From Calais to Paris he had noted every object on the road with the eagerness of a child. In conversing with his French fellow-passengers he had laughed heartily at his own mistakes—the mistakes of a man who has only a book-knowledge of a foreign language. Still he had made himself understood, and that was a good beginning. When he took leave of his companions in the railway carriage, they all felt as if they were parting with an old friend. An aged priest gave him his blessing, and a pretty little French milliner looked unutterable things.

Vivian anathematised the long delay occasioned by his having to wait his turn for the examination of his baggage; but that formality was at length gone through, and he was at liberty to go where he listed.

In the Rue de Dunkerque, a neat cab, with its glazed-hatted, red-vested, metal-buttoned driver, stood invitingly handy; and giving the direction, "Grand Hotel—Boulevard des Capucines—drive slow," Vivian threw himself into the back seat, all

eyes and ears for the delightful novelties that surrounded him.

The tall houses, with their airy balconies, the signs, all French; the neat-stepping grisettes, with their pretty quilted caps, or wearing nothing at all on their glossy, braided hair; the cab-drivers cracking their whips incessantly—the sounds resembling a volley of pistol-shots; the soldiers, the portly well-to-do shopkeepers, bustling and self-satisfied; the bright-eyed little street-loafers, the workmen in blouses, the great country carts covered with canvas tilts, drawn by stout Norman stallions, and driven by pretty girls in snowy caps, all convinced Vivian that he was either dreaming, or else in Paris, the city of his dreams.

Then, turning a corner, the broad line of the boulevards opened on his view, thronged with such a tide of human beings as reminded him of the Strand towards sunset. Omnibuses, carts, carriages, buggies, mounted chasseurs, and civilians on horseback, filled the streets, while Parisians of both sexes, travellers of all nations, and wearing every costume, infantry soldiers, armed policemen, native idlers and gossips, moved along in an unbroken stream. The life-long dream was realised—this was Paris at last.

An Englishman of susceptibility is always impressed by the first sight of Paris; the contrast to smoky London seems so great, and the street architecture is so much more brilliant than what he sees at home.

The streets were unusually bustling when Vivian arrived, for the Emperor Napoleon had held a grand review of troops that afternoon in the Bois de Boulogne, in honour of his guest, the Czar of Russia, an occasion that came near being fatal to both, for it was only by a miracle that the pistol-shot, fired by a hireling brandy-crazed Pole, failed to kill both Emperors as they sat together in a carriage.

Vivian's carriage drove into a beautiful courtyard, surrounded by the buildings of that magnificent hotel, which fills a Londoner with astonishment.

It was well that our young traveller had engaged a room long beforehand by telegram, otherwise he would not have obtained lodgings in the vast caravanseri.

After bathing and dressing he sallied forth, and as he strolled along the boulevard, might easily have been mistaken from his costume and ease of manner for a Parisian. While most of his countryman flaunted their nationality, and wore their English hats and gray tweeds, and huge red Dundreary whiskers, and carried inevitable Murrays under their arms, and tramped along in clumsy English over-shoes, turned up at the toes, Vivian had provided

himself with a glossy French beaver, a dark frock coat, pearl-coloured pantaloons, neat-fitting boots, and gray kid gloves. His face was closely shaven, except where a light blonde moustache slightly shaded without concealing his upper lip. Many a bright eye glanced at him in undisguised admiration as he moved quickly and gracefully along the street.

But when he came to order dinner in a crowded restaurant, his accent clearly betrayed his nationality and swelled the amount of his bill—strangers, during the Exposition, paying a heavy premium for their foreign origin.

Forth again into the open air after a good dinner, our young friend seemed emerging into fairy land. How he, fresh from the narrow sidewalks of London, marvelled at the broad footways, wide enough for streets, and level as billiard-tables, with their double rows of ladies and gentlemen seated at open-air tables before the glittering cafés, sipping coffee, claret, or lemonade.

The crowd was denser than ever, for not only was it a holiday, but the close of their daily occupations had released thousands of workpeople, who swelled the tide of promenaders, or sat on the benches along the kerb-stones under the continuous lines of trees. All the world seemed represented in the moving throng. Here came a stately Turk, wearing the flowing robes and red fez of Stamboul; there a Hungarian magyar in a splendid hussar costume of crimson and gold; then again an Arab, black-eyed and black-bearded, all in white. There were beautiful Englishwomen, plump and fresh-coloured, and accompanied by brothers and lovers as stylish as the Parisians themselves.

But who is the sylphide, attired without ostentation, but with exquisite taste, every fold of whose dress is artistic, who wears such a love of a hat on her braided raven hair, whose eyes are so bright without effrontery, whose nose is just a little bit turned up, but prettier than if it were Grecian, who has such tiny feet and slender ankles, who is so well gloved and well shod, and who walks with such elastic grace? Vivian knew at a glance that it was that compound of all that is problematical, contradictory, bewitching, and bewildering—a Parisian woman.

After *la Parisienne* came a bronzed and decorated soldier of the Crimean and Italian campaigns, last from Africa, probably. How quiet and unconscious was his bearing! No swaggering swashbucklers are these men, who have really served with distinction. The rufflers and braggarts are those who have only smelled powder on a festive field day.

We have said that every new object filled our young traveller with delight. As he glanced to the left, along the diagonal line of the Rue de la Paix, he noted how grandly the bronze column of the Place Vendôme, surmounted by the figure of Napoleon the Great, rose against the darkening sky.

Passing the beautiful church of the Madeleine, with its columned peristyle, Vivian stood in the Place de la Concorde, with its obelisk; on the one side, the garden of the Tuileries palace, on the other, the superb avenue leading in a straight line to one of the most famous monuments of Paris, the Arch of Triumph.

The fountains were playing—the bugles of an infantry regiment were heard in the distance—daylight was giving way, not to darkness, but to light, and a thousand illuminations were describing their arabesques on the plane of the city, while yet the glow of the sunken sun was lingering in the western sky.

Vivian paused enchanted. How grateful on that summer night was the rushing sound of the waters as they sprang aloft in the evening air, and fell in silver showers over the Tritons and Nereids that guarded their marble basins!

Long shadows were falling from the colossal statues that represent the great provincial cities of France, while, dominating all, the red granite monolith that once towered above Thebes, reared its tall shaft against the Parisian sky.

Vivian sat down on a bench, and recalled what he had read about the scene he now beheld for the first time. He remembered that this same square once bore the name of Louis XV.

"Yes," he said to himself, "and here stood a statue of the king, surrounded by female figures representing Strength, Peace, Prudence, and Justice, all in honour of the man who surrendered the reins of state to Pompadour and du Barry, who led the life of Sardanapalus, who supplied his losses at the gaming-table by robbing the public purse, who speculated in corn and stocks, whose fondness for a favourite cost the royal treasury, in five years, one hundred and eighty millions of pounds, whose ill success in war cost France vast territorial possessions in America, who had no respect for the sanctity of his subjects' homes or the honour of their wives and daughters, who abolished the parliaments and asserted the supremacy of his will over the law. Yet this man was styled the well-beloved, and an attempt upon his worthless life was punished by the infliction on the assassin of tortures that would have disgraced the barbarism of the Chinese penal code!"

Vivian as an Englishman had a hearty hatred of oppression. His kindled imagination called up a vision of the scenes enacted on this spot. He saw before him the column of republican pikemen escorting the unhappy Louis XVI. and his ill-fated partner, Marie Antoinette, back from Versailles, humiliated and despairing, with Theroin de Mericourt brandishing her sabre, the fatal "man with the long beard" heading the march, and the heads of two faithful lifeguardsmen carried aloft on poles in the midst of the rabble rout.

Time it was to change the name of the place to the Square of Revolution. What seas of innocent blood were shed here in the name of liberty by the accursed guillotine!

"Who can forget the baptism of blood?" exclaimed Vivian to himself. "Who can forget the martyr who was brought to this Golgotha on the 21st of January, 1793? Other days beheld crowds of victims: that day only one. He who had been all his life weak and wavering, displayed in that supreme hour the firmness and courage of a Christian martyr. His countenance alone, of the many thousands here assembled, agitated by hate, some few by compassion, was serene. His lips moved; but only those nearest to him knew that he proclaimed his innocence, and pardoned his judges, for the drums rolled furiously, and the fierce cry, 'Long live the Republic!' drowned his last syllables. Then it was that his confessor, the Abbé Edgeworth, bade him adieu in the memorable words, 'Son of Saint Louis, ascend to Heaven!' Scarcely were they uttered when the blade descended, and Louis the Sixteenth was a headless corpse. What illustrious victims followed! Marie Antoinette, Charlotte Corday, Madame Roland and a nameless host. No wonder that France has once more re-baptised this place, and sought to banish the era of murder by the name of 'Concord.'"

Let us pardon a very young gentleman, fresh from the university, his somewhat transcendental declamation, addressed to himself. We are afraid he forgot poor King Louis, and his luckless wife, and the other victims very shortly afterwards, as he strolled through the illuminated galleries of the Palais Royal, with their endless rows of jewellers' shops.

Into one of these he sauntered, having been attracted by some exquisitely-fashioned breast-plate,

of the newest style. Vivian was no coxcomb, but he had a pardonable weakness for diamonds.

As the plate-glass window of the shop displayed, in immense letters, "Ici on parle Anglais," with the English translation beneath, "English spoken here," Vivian accosted the shopman in his native tongue.

Greatly to his disgust, the man replied: "Ze man vot spikes Angleesh, he not een—he be just gone out."

Then Vivian aired his college French, but the tradesman was too obtuse to understand him.

In this dilemma a person who was lounging in the shop, and who had been eyeing Vivian very keenly, civilly volunteered his services as interpreter.

The stranger was a stout man, very plainly, almost shabbily dressed. His exact age could hardly be conjectured, for, though his face was not that of an old man, yet his thick hair, beard, eyebrows, and heavy moustache had turned gray.

Vivian accepted his services, and soon concluded a bargain with the shopkeeper, through the medium of the interpreter, much more to the satisfaction of the purchaser than the seller, for the stranger detected and foiled an attempt at imposition on the part of the jeweller, who had one tariff of prices for English travellers, and a much lower one for his own countrymen.

The manner of the stranger was so gentlemanly that Vivian could not think of his being a *valet de place* on the look-out for employment, and so tendered him his thanks, instead of offering him a fee.

The stranger disclaimed any service, and then said:

"You should take some lessons in French conversation, sir. I see, from your efforts at speaking, that you have studied the grammar of the language; but you should practice talking it."

"I purpose doing so," answered Vivian.

"Every man is selfish when his interests are at stake," replied the stranger, with a smile. "Might I venture to offer my services as a teacher?"

"Is that your profession?" asked Vivian.

"It is."

"You speak English so perfectly that I presume it is your native tongue."

"You are mistaken, sir. I am a Frenchman; but I have made the mastery of your language a matter of business. I write and speak several languages."

He handed Vivian a card, on which was written: "Maurice Grammont, Teacher of Languages, Hotel Beau-Séjour, Boulevard Poissonnière."

"Mr. Grammont," replied Vivian, "I will call on you to-morrow morning."

"At what hour?"

"Eleven o'clock."

"Very well, sir; I shall expect you. My terms are moderate."

"No matter for your terms," answered Vivian.

"If I make satisfactory progress under your tuition, you shall have no reason to regret receiving me as a pupil. Here is my name, sir."

He handed the teacher a card.

Grammont extended his hand; but Vivian did not happen to notice the action.

"I beg pardon," said the teacher. "I thought it was your English custom to shake hands on taking leave."

"My dear sir, excuse me," said Vivian, hastily.

He took Grammont's proffered hand. The teacher shook it warmly, and tears came into his eyes.

"To-morrow, then, at eleven, sir," he said, reluctantly relinquishing the young man's hand.

"Without fail, Mr. Grammont. Good-night!"

"How the old gentleman squeezed my hand!" thought Vivian, as he walked away briskly up the Rue Vivienne.

"He must be very poor, and pupils scarce with him. I am glad I happened to meet him, for his sake and mine."

In twenty minutes he reached his room in the Grand Hotel, and in twenty more gave audible demonstration of his being sound asleep.

CHAPTER VI.

At ten o'clock the next day, Mr. Maurice Grammont, as he called himself, was seated in his room in the Hotel Beau-Séjour, when three distinct raps were heard at his door.

On his invitation to enter, a young man, attired in an English travelling-suit, came in. There was nothing particular about his dress, except that it was London all over, and nothing peculiar about his handsome, florid face, except that he wore a profusion of hair, glossy black curls, heavy beard and moustache and jet black eyebrows, with light blue eyes, rather an unusual combination.

"I say, d'ye speak English?" was his salutation.

"I am told that I speak it perfectly," replied Grammont.

"That's lucky, for I don't speak a word of French

—rather an awkward predicament here. I want a few lessons. What d'ye charge?"

"Ten francs an hour."

"Pay in advance?"

"With strangers, sir."

"It's all the same to me. There's my name."

He handed a card, on which was engraved "Hon. Arthur Augustus Craven," to which was added in pencil, "Grand Hotel, Boulevard des Capucines."

"I'll take my first lesson now, if you like," he said, sitting down, and placing two five-franc pieces on the table.

"Do you wish to study grammar, Mr. Craven?"

"Study grammar! No. Teach a feller a few phrases, so that he can order his dinner and chaff the pretty shop girls. I learn by the ear very quickly; heavy boots!"

"Very well, then," said Grammont; "I will dictate a sentence very slowly; you repeat it after me, and then I will explain the meaning."

"Proceed."

Grammont pronounced a French sentence very slowly, and was preparing to repeat it, when the Hon. Augustus Craven caught up the phrase, and uttered it like lightning, with the purest Parisian accent.

Grammont looked at him in surprise, and then pushed the money towards him.

"You have no occasion for my instruction, sir," he said.

Instantly changing his voice, the visitor said:

"Have I humbugged you, or are you humbugging me? Don't you know me?"

"That voice!" cried the teacher. "Who are you?"

"Your dutiful son, Conrad Rivers," said the young man, in his natural voice.

"But how did you escape?" cried the teacher, astounded at the disclosure, and displaying little of that pleasurable emotion which even a criminal father may be supposed to feel on meeting a criminal son, from whom he thought himself separated for life.

"Bah! How long do you think the galleys of Toulon could hold a man of my ingenuity and daring? Now did you think the Felons' League, to which we both belong, would suffer their most valuable member to serve out his sentence—hard labour for life—without supplying him with the means of escape? They knew that, with a little assistance, no prison in France could hold me. So you see me again free as air. A brief seclusion is all that came of my sentence—all except—here his brow grew dark as a thunder-cloud—the indelible brand upon my shoulder—the accursed T. F."

Conrad paused a moment, and then added:

"When my seething flesh hissed beneath the red-hot iron, I uttered no cry of pain—I did not give the scoundrelly authorities that satisfaction—perhaps I did not feel it, but the iron entered deeper than the surface; it entered my soul, and I swore then within myself to set all laws at defiance, and to recoil from no crime that barred my way to fortune. I was sentenced for burglary, the indictment for forgery not being pressed, because one was enough. You taught me the skillful use of the pen and the jimmy, the red-hot brand added the knife and pistol to my stock-in-trade. But enough of this," he went on, in a lighter tone. "Was not your surprise at seeing me affected? Perhaps I am indebted to you, father, for the means of escape?"

The elder man shook his head.

"When you were taken away, my dear Conrad," he said, "I lost all hope. An ordinary provincial prison—even Mazas here in Paris—could not have daunted me; but the triply-guarded Toulon—I thought you lost for life."

"Therefore you made no effort?" asked the convict.

"I had not—I thought the effort premature. I thought at the commencement of your incarceration you would be so strictly watched that any attempt at securing your escape would fail certainly and close the door of hope; whereas, if you disarmed doubt by a cautious submission to your lot, you would then inspire confidence, and there might be a reasonable chance of getting you out of limbo."

"You reason very well, sir," said Conrad, coldly.

"And I suppose in three or four years, after my back had been broken, and my head turned gray with anguish, you would have begun to move, as your sworn duty as a member of the League, to say nothing of our relationship, should have prompted you. Something of this I learned of our President?"

"You have seen him then?"

"Of course. I have been out of prison some time—long enough to let my hair grow and to dye it black. The League, it seems, has done a good business. My dividend, as a stockholder, was very handsome. I don't believe a single legitimate company is more solvent or more honourable. The honesty of thieves is proverbial. Our association might give

lessons in morality to the *Crédit Mobilier*—of course, I mean in the custody and distribution of the funds. As to the legitimacy of their acquisition, that is quite another question."

"And what do you propose doing now?"

"I propose doing somebody, that you may be sure, sir; but as yet the victim's name is unknown to me. There are plenty of wealthy strangers here."

"But is it not hazardous to come to Paris—right into the jaws of danger?"

"You know the sailors say that the safest place to put your head in during a sea-fight is a shot-hole. The very last place the police would look for me is where I am best known. That my disguise is perfect is shown by the fact that you, my own father, a professional, familiar with all sorts of disguises, failed to identify me—so with the President of the League. It was even hard to convince him that I was the veritable Conrad Rivers. No, to a man of my nerve and resources, this is the very place for me. I have taken lodgings at the Grand Hotel, and this very morning I met one of the detectives who arrested me, stopped him, and inquired the way."

"Nobody can deny your courage," said the father. "I was only questioning your judgment."

"Leave that to me," replied the convict. "I have an old head on young shoulders."

The preceding dialogue has shown the reader two men, one just escaped from prison, the other richly deserving it. We have seen that both were under false names, but that they claimed the family name of Rivers.

Yet this name of Rivers no more rightly belonged to them than the names of Grammont and Craven.

The elder of the two men, as the reader may have conjectured, was no other than Ralph Warner; the younger, the child he carried away from the porter's lodge at Warner Hall, as detailed in chapter IV.

He had kept the letter of his promise to Janet Prince—he had made no attempt on the life of his charge.

But he had done worse—he had perverted the mind of the boy and trained him to vice. He had taught him all the accomplishments he possessed himself—had made him an admirable linguist, a consummate penman, a splendid horseman, a master of all arms, offensive and defensive, and then showed him how all these acquirements could be applied to schemes of deception, fraud, and violence.

From the day of Sir Lawrence's funeral Reginald Warner had neither seen nor heard of his guilty brother. And there was sufficient reason for this. Ralph Warner left the country under the assumed name of Paul Rivers. The boy, to whom he gave the name of Conrad, supposed that Paul Rivers was the real name of his father, and had been kept in entire ignorance of the name and history of the Warner family.

Paul Rivers might have been prosperous and wealthy by honourable means, but he was one of those exceptional natures, who seem to pursue evil courses from a genuine love of evil. A delineation of the career of such men shows that a semblance of prosperity is attained by them with more toil and trouble than honest success would have required; that their triumph is only illusory, because it produces no genuine happiness; that they are almost always detected and punished in the end, or, if they escape human justice, that their crime carries the punishment along with it, in an amount of mental suffering compared with which physical chastisement is as nothing in the balance.

Whether these two men, one born to evil, the other perverted to it, deliberately trained to it, will escape the consequences of their crimes, will be seen when this faithful record of their career is brought to a close.

Their interview was not very cordial, and the manner of the elder Rivers, as we shall continue to call him, was very constrained. He frequently consulted his watch, and finally told Conrad that he had better go, because he was expecting a gentleman at eleven o'clock. He was painfully anxious that the young convict should not meet Vivian Warner.

"I suppose you think your company isn't good enough for me," said the convict, rising. "Very well—I'll take myself off, for I, too, have an engagement at eleven o'clock."

The two men shook hands coldly and parted.

"I should like very much to know who this person is, he is so anxious to keep out of my way," thought the convict. "I must know what game he is running down, and have a share in it, if it is worth the trouble."

He looked at his watch. It wanted ten minutes to eleven.

He hurried downstairs and crossed the boulevard. Without raising his head, he managed to get a glance at the front of the hotel, and saw his father cautiously looking out of the window and watching him.

So he jumped into a carriage and ordered the coachman to drive to the Porte St. Martin, but he got out at the corner of the Rue Faubourg St. Denis, and walking through the Rue de l'Echiquier and Rue Bergère, which run parallel to the boulevard, into which he turned by the Rue Rougemont, and, keeping close to the wall of the Hotel Beau-Séjour, walked into the carriage drive, and waited for the expected visitor. He had made good use of his time, and eleven o'clock had not yet struck.

Exactly on the stroke of the hour a fashionably-dressed young man made his appearance at the porter's lodge, and inquired for Mr. Maurice Grammont, teacher of languages.

Now there was nothing remarkable in this. Rivers, to cover up his nefarious transactions, and also to obtain information which he turned to unworthy account, actually did teach languages and receive pupils.

But what struck the convict with astonishment was that the young man he saw before him was the living image of himself, unless all the mirrors he had ever looked into were false.

The same blonde hair, blue eyes, florid complexion—the same figure—the same gait! It was a miracle, yet one of those miracles of which there is abundance of positive proof.

Here was a mystery he resolved to probe to the bottom. At first he thought of following the young man upstairs, and breaking in upon him and his father unannounced, in hopes of learning something from their surprise. But he instantly dismissed this project as too crude. The better way, he concluded, would be to wait until this mysterious person whom his father was so anxious to keep out of his path—a very suspicious circumstance—should leave the hotel, and then he would track him unobserved.

With this view, and certain that his father was now engaged with the stranger, he crossed the boulevard, and sitting down at one of the little tables on the side walk outside of a café, called for a glass of lemonade. While waiting in this way, he took the precaution to hold up a newspaper before his face, so that if the elder Rivers looked out of the window, he would not detect him; but, in reality, over the edge of the paper he kept a vigilant eye on the single doorway of the Hotel Beau-Séjour, certain that no one could leave the house without his seeing him.

At the expiration of an hour, the young man who had so excited the convict's curiosity, left the hotel, and leisurely strolled down the boulevard.

At the same moment the convict rose and walked in the same direction, but on the opposite side of the way, keeping his eyes fixed on the object of his scrutiny.

The young man, unconscious of observation, turned into the courtyard of the Grand Hotel, crossed it and entered the house; the convict, here known as the Hon. Augustus Craven, being close behind him.

The young man said a few words to a waiter, and then went upstairs.

The Hon. Augustus Craven asked the waiter if he knew the young man.

"Yes, sir. That is an English gentleman, like yourself—Mr. Vivian Warner, of Warner Hall, Yorkshire."

"Does he stop here?"

"Yes, sir."

"How long has he been here?"

"No longer than you, sir. He arrived from London last night. He is a very liberal gentleman," added the waiter, "and is said to be very rich. He has just ordered a saddle horse to ride to the Wood of Boulogne."

"At what time?"

"Four o'clock."

"Well," said the Hon. Augustus Craven, "I'm glad you mentioned it. Let me have a horse at the same hour."

"Very well, sir."

"Vivian Warner," thought the convict. "How came he to look so exactly like me? If he did but know it, it is a very dangerous resemblance. With that face and figure, hair and eyes, he is certain of receiving more attention in Paris than will prove healthy or agreeable."

CHAPTER VII.

LET US now cast a rapid glance backwards, and see what passed at the Hotel Beau-Séjour between the teacher of languages and his pupil while Conrad the Convict was waiting and watching.

Ralph Warner, alias Paul Rivers, alias Maurice Grammont, received Vivian with a cordiality that surprised him, for there was in his manner more warmth than French politeness or gratitude for patronage could account for. There were even tears in his eyes as he shook the young man warmly by the hand. The astonishment this remarkable demonstration caused in the visitor was so manifest, that

the elder man felt constrained to make some explanation.

"My dear sir," he said, "you so closely resemble a very dear young friend of mine—a friend too dearly loved, too early lost—that your appearance has greatly agitated me. I was struck with it last night, and to-day more strongly. In fact, I am so much moved that I feel incapable of giving you a lesson to-day. Indeed, if you heed what I say there will be no question between us of any lessons at all."

This speech was so strange that Vivian began to entertain the idea that Mr. Grammont was partially insane, or perhaps grief had warped his intellect. He sat down and waited patiently for some further development.

"May I crave to be informed, Mr. Warner," continued the teacher, "how long you propose to remain in Paris?"

"That is quite uncertain, sir. I am a man of leisure, but I don't think I can tear myself away from the fascinations of this city short of six weeks, at least."

"Mr. Warner, you must leave Paris instantly!"

"Leave Paris instantly!" echoed the young man.

"Yes," said Ralph, earnestly. "Every hour—yea, every moment's delay is fraught with peril to you. And you must not only leave Paris, but France. Lose not a moment's time in setting out for the frontier. Disguise yourself and flee. You have enemies here who are plotting your disgrace. I cannot be more explicit. Fly, if you would avoid trouble and shame!"

"Decidedly," thought Vivian, "the poor man is crazy."

With this conviction, instead of assuming an offended tone, he replied, very quietly, though firmly:

"I certainly cannot take your advice, my good sir, unless you explain yourself more fully. I am an Englishman just graduated from the university, visiting Paris for the first time, not knowing a soul here; having no enemies—for I have given no occasion for enmity—and how I can be in danger passes my comprehension."

"I know whereof I speak," was the rejoinder, "but I can give you no explanation. My lips are sealed. Promise me that you will leave France at once. I have told you all I dared—more would be fatal to me and do you no good."

Vivian revolved in his mind all possible contingencies. Discarding the theory of insanity on the part of Grammont, the only danger he could conceive of was one common to all strangers in the city—that is, there might be some scheme on foot to rob him; this person might be cognisant of such a plan on the part of some professional thief or thieves, with whom he was affiliated, and, in a moment of compunction, had felt bound to give him this vague warning. He could conceive of no other danger, and this he treated with sovereign contempt. In the first place, he had perfect confidence in the efficacy of the imperial police, always strong and vigilant, and doubly so now, when the honour of a city that opened her gates to the wide world and invited all comers to her Great Exposition was at stake. Robbery and violence in public and reputable places were simply impossible.

There remained the danger of theft and injury in the low haunts, to which curiosity sometimes attracts travellers, and Vivian had no thought of exploring the subterranean strata of the great city.

But the conduct of Grammont inspired distrust, and Vivian mentally resolved that he would never again set foot in his room.

"You will pardon me one question, sir," he said.

"Would payment for a score of lessons in advance be of any present service to you?"

"I am in no present want," replied the teacher, somewhat haughtily. "I dislike the idea of receiving money before I have earned it."

"As you please, sir," replied Vivian. "And since you are indisposed to give me a lesson to-day, I will bid you good-morning."

"Young man," said the teacher, gravely, "I hope to find that you have taken my advice, and that I shall not see you here again!"

"You certainly will not," thought Vivian, as he bowed and took his leave.

"Rash boy!" said Ralph Warner to himself, when the door had closed on the young man. "He little knows the trouble that is in store for him. How I longed to press him to my heart, and tell him all. Yet he would have recoiled from the guilt-stained man who claimed him for a son. The time will come—but not yet—when he will pardon my sin for the love that prompted it. The time will come when I shall once more confront that brother who grasped all his uncle's wealth, while I was an outcast and a fugitive, and say to him: 'You have reared my son in luxury and honour, I have trained yours in infamy and shame. Give me back my gallant English gentleman, and take your galley-slave in

exchange.' Conrad and Vivian must not meet—yet, how to prevent it, except by getting Vivian out of France? Supposing I denounced Conrad to the authorities—then the poniards of the Felons' League would punish the treachery, and I should not witness the consummation of my schemes. In what a complicated maze of entanglements a life of intrigue and guilt plunges its victim. I might have been honest, but—it is too late now—it is too late!"

Meanwhile Vivian, throwing care to the winds, was enjoying a saunter along the brilliant line of the boulevards.

At four o'clock he mounted his horse in the courtyard of the Grand Hotel, and cantered forth gaily in the direction of the Bois de Boulogne, surrounded by fellow-equestrians, and in the midst of a tide of glittering equipages.

Five minutes afterwards, the Hon. Augustus Craven vaulted into his saddle, and, taking the same direction, rode as briskly as the municipal regulations allowed until he had come in sight of Vivian, when he tightened his rein and followed him at a more moderate gait.

Close behind Vivian, and equally, though unostentatiously, observant of his movements, was a third horseman; a man superbly mounted and very fashionably dressed. His lavender kids, the bouquet in his button-hole, which he had just received from the fair hands of Isabella, the flower-girl at the corner of the Rue Scribe—above all, his peculiar style of horsemanship, seemed to indicate that he was a member of that aristocratic association, the French Jockey Club.

So thought every one who looked at him—except the Hon. Augustus Craven, who knew otherwise. The Hon. Augustus Craven, *alias* Conrad the Convict, knew to a certainty that this stylish cavalier was one of the keenest and most daring of the French detectives. He was the very official who had arrested himself a year ago—a memorable date; for his trial, conviction, and sentence had followed in a rapid series.

George Derville, the detective, looked no more like the man who had a year ago laid his hand upon the red-branded shoulder of Conrad, than he did like Louis Napoleon, but the convict was too keen an adept in the art of disguises to be deceived. He recognised a man by the expression of his mouth and the glance of his eye, by the very play of the muscles of his face, even if his features were distorted, his complexion stained, and his hair dyed. Yet so superior was his own art, so magnificent, if we may use the word, his audacity, that he did not hesitate to ride up alongside the detective and accost him.

The Britannic accent he gave to his bad French was inimitable.

He inquired the way to the lake in the wood, and Derville courteously responded, eyeing him, however, with the professional vigilance that never abandoned him, even in the most careless moment. Conrad had the hardihood to prolong the conversation, and was satisfied that he safely underwent the scrutiny of the official.

Both these men, as they rode side by side, kept an eye on Vivian, yet neither showed that he was on the look-out.

After a courteous interchange of commonplaces, the Hon. Augustus Craven fell back, and allowed the detective to precede him.

All at once a cry arose from the riders and coachmen in advance of them, and a horse came towards them at a frantic gallop, insane with terror, and bearing on his back a youthful female rider. Her hat had fallen off, and her beautiful black tresses streamed wild on the wind. She was pale as marble, and her lips were closed firm, but there was no trace of ignoble terror in her countenance. She kept a firm hold of the reins, and sat back in the saddle, throwing her whole weight upon the horse's mouth. She succeeded in drawing his head down to his breast, but not in checking his mad career. The infuriated brute instinctively avoided the carriages, but it was only to imperil the limbs of the rider by bringing them almost in contact with the trees he grazed in his lightning course. His path was directly towards a huge picturesque pile of jagged rocks overhanging the deep water.

As the animal came on with the speed of a whirlwind, Vivian wheeled his horse and snatched at the bridle, but missed it. Dashing his spurs rowel-deep into his horse's flanks, the young man goaded him into a flight of speed equal to the runaway's. A moment more and both riders would have been dashed to pieces; but just at the crisis of their fate, Vivian, throwing his right arm round the lady, tore her from the saddle, while, exerting all the strength of his left hand and arm on the savage curb-bit of his own horse, he threw the animal on his haunches and held him quivering on the spot.

A loud cheer rose from the mounted gentlemen

who witnessed this daring and successful act, while more than one lady fainted from the intensity of her emotions.

The lady Vivian had saved, however, had a heart as courageous as his own; and though the pallor of her face was intensified, and her breath came short and quick, she was able to speak and to thank him, as he dismounted and lifted his fair burden to the ground.

The whole perilous adventure had occupied less than a minute; and almost at the moment of the rescue, a white-haired gentleman reached the spot, pale with agony, threw himself from his horse, and took the young lady to his arms.

"Are you hurt, Clara?" he asked, in a trembling voice.

"Not a particle, sir," she answered. "But that I am alive to tell you so is owing to the heroism of this gentleman."

The old man grasped Vivian's hand, and thanked him warmly.

An exchange of cards followed an invitation from the young lady and the old gentleman to visit them.

They proved to be father and daughter, Mr. Norman and Miss Clara Vane. They were from London, and, as a matter of course, were guests at the Grand Hotel.

Mr. Vane glanced with a shudder at the pile of rocks on which lay the lifeless and mangled body of the run-away horse.

"The scoundrel who let us the horses will suffer in his pocket. He promised me a safe, easy-bitted horse for Clara, and I promise him a sound thrashing as soon as I get back."

At this moment a young man came up with Miss Vane's hat, which he had picked up at a distance, and courteously presented it.

An empty carriage was hailed, the young lady handed into it, and, with a smiling adieu to Vivian, she left the scene of terror, her father riding beside the carriage. Vivian followed at a little distance, "the observed of all observers."

"That was a gallant deed, sir," said the Hon. Augustus Craven to the detective.

"Oh, yes!" replied the detective. "The young man has plenty of pluck—but for all that—"

"What?" asked Conrad.

"Nothing," answered the detective. "Nothing. Good afternoon, sir."

And he spurred after Vivian, while the Hon. A. Craven cantered after both.

(To be continued.)

LEIGHTON HALL.

CHAPTER XXII.

Plain speech is better than much wit,
So ye shall bear with me; albeit I think
Ye have caught the mark wherewith my heart is bent.

OWING to some mistake Roy did not get Edna's second letter, telling him what day to expect her; consequently, there was no one waiting for her at the station, and, learning that Leighton Place was only three-quarters of a mile distant, she determined upon leaving her trunk and making the journey on foot. It was one of those bright, balmy days in early September, when nature, like a matron in the full maturity of her charms, reigns in all her loveliness a very queen. On the hills there was that soft, purplish haze, which only autumn brings; the sky above was without a cloud, save here and there a floating, feathery mist, which intensified the deep blue of the heavens, while in the calmness and peace that pervaded all nature and the golden sunshine that glorified the landscape, Edna involuntarily found herself recalling the line:

Too much of heaven on earth to last.

Indeed, everything around her seemed almost too much like heaven for her to keep it long; and when at last she reached the gate which opened into the Leighton grounds, she was obliged to stop and rest upon a rustic bench beneath one of the maples which shaded the park.

She was there at last—there at Charlie's old home, Roy's home! and her eyes were feasting themselves upon the beauties, which had not been overdrawn either by Charlie's partiality, or Maude's enthusiasm.

Everything was beautiful—from the green, velvety turf, the noble elms, the profusion of bright flowers and shrubs, intertwined with statuary and cool white urns, showing in the distance where stood the handsome house, with its broad piazza and friendly open doors, all basking in the warmth and sunlight of that autumnal morning. She thought of her picture, and said to herself:

"It is like the original, though not equal to it," and then, with a sad kind of a smile, born of a sudden heart-pang, she saw what she knew must be the

roof of the Gothic cottage, whither she once intended moving Roy and his mother, so that they should not be in the way of the gaieties with which she meant to fill the house. That time lay far back in the past. She had learned a great deal since then. Charlie was dead; and though she shuddered, as she always did, when she recalled the awful night of nearly two years ago, she felt no very bitter pain that it was hers to go first alone to the home she had thought to call her own. Time, which will heal almost any heart-wound, had been very kind to Edna, and though she always remembered Charlie with sadness and pity, thoughts of him had long since ceased to make her unhappy; and when at last she left her seat by the gate and pursued her way to the house, Roy was far more in her mind than the boy Charlie, who slept the sleep that knows no waking, all unconscious that his wife was standing now at the very portal of his old home, and ringing for admission.

Roy was away that morning; he had gone to Oakwood, where Maude was just at present. Fond as ever of croquet, she had got up a little party, and invited Roy. John Heyford was also there for a day or so, together with one or two young ladies, friends of Georgie; and so the game was a very merry one, and just at its height when Edna's ring was answered by the servant girl, who, inviting Edna into the library, bade her be seated while she carried her card to her mistress. Holding it close to her dim eyes, Mrs. Churchill made out the word "Overton," and knew the expected stranger had come.

"How awkward that Roy should be away," she said, as, declining the servant's offered aid, she made her way alone to the library.

It was a peculiarity of hers not to be helped by any one if she could avoid it, and there was something touching and pitiful about her as she walked slowly through the hall, trying to seem to see, with one hand partly extended in front, and making sundry graceful, cautious motions.

Edna heard her coming, and arose to meet her, her cheeks glowing and her breath coming pantingly at first, but when she saw the pale, languid woman, who stopped just inside the door, and whose hand seemed feeling for something, all her nervousness left her suddenly, and quick as thought she darted forward, and grasping the uncertain hand, exclaimed:

"Mrs. Churchill, here I am—Miss Overton. Let me lead you to a seat."

It was a blithe, silvery-toned young voice, expressive of genuine interest and sympathy for the poor blind woman, who did not refuse Edna's offered assistance, but held her hand, even after seated in her chair.

"I am glad to welcome you, Miss Overton," she said; "but am sorry you had to walk. We did not know you were coming to-day. You must be very tired."

Edna assured her she was not; and then Mrs. Churchill continued:

"I cannot see you as distinctly as I wish I could, for I like to know the faces of those I have about me. It is terrible to be blind!"

Her lip quivered as she said it, and instantly there awoke in Edna's bosom a feeling akin to love for this woman, who was her mother, in one sense of the word, and before whom she knelt, saying cheerily:

"Let me come nearer to you, then. Perhaps you will get an idea of me. I don't mind your looking at me as long as you like."

And Mrs. Churchill did look at the fresh young face held so close to her own, and passed her hand over the mass of golden brown hair, and lifted one of the heavy curls and held it to the light; then, with a gesture of satisfaction, she said:

"There, that will do. I think I know now tolerably well how you look. I certainly know the feeling of your hands and hair. You are a little bit of a girl, and Maude rightly named you Dot. She is at Oakwood now; and Roy is there this morning. They are having a croquet party, I believe. Maude is croquet mad, I think."

Then it occurred to Mrs. Churchill that her guest might like to see her room, and she arose, saying:

"I do not like being led; it implies too much helplessness; but I think I shall not mind using you for my guide. I can lean on your shoulder nicely. I am glad you are so short."

The soft, white hand, grown now a little thin, rested itself softly on Edna's shoulder in a caressing kind of way, and the two went slowly from the library and out in the wide hall, through which blew the warm September wind, sweet with the perfume of flowers it had kissed in its passage across the garden. To Edna it seemed as if she had gained an entrance into paradise, as through either open door she caught glimpses of the beautiful grounds, stretching

away to the horizon. Slowly up the long flight of stairs they went, till they reached the hall above, and Mrs. Churchill, pointing to a door, said:

"That is Roy's room, and the one farther down, where the door is shut, was Charlie's, my other son, who died two years ago. Yours is this way, opposite mine. I hope you will like it. Georgie Burton said it was all right."

They were in the room by this time, and with a cry of pleasure Edna broke away from the hand on her shoulder, and running to the window, from which the grounds and so many miles of country could be seen, exclaimed:

"Oh, I do, I do like it so much! It is all like fairyland; and seems a dream that I should ever be in a place like this! I hope I shall not wake and find it so; that would be very dreadful."

She was talking more to herself than to Mrs. Churchill, who, nevertheless, said to her:

"Have you, then, seen so hard times that this place should seem so desirable?"

"Not hard in one sense," Edna said. "Almost everybody has been kind to me; but—" she hesitated a moment, and Mrs. Churchill added:

"Yes; Maude told me you had lost all your nearest relatives; were in black for your father, I think; but you have laid off mourning, I imagine, from the colour of your travelling suit; and I am glad, for I would rather have you in bright colours. I am sure they suit you better," she said, laying her hand again on Edna's shoulder, and asking if she cared to dress for lunch; "Because, if you do not, there is no necessity, as Roy lunches at Oakwood. He will be home to dinner, and some of the young people may come with him."

This brought to light the fact that Edna's trunk was still at the station, whither Mrs. Churchill immediately despatched a servant for it; then leaving Edna alone for a time, she bade her rest, and amuse herself in any way she liked until lunch was ready.

It was a very delicate lunch, and served in the prettiest of little rooms, where the French windows opened upon a raised bed of bright flowers, whose perfume filled the room, as did the delicious air of that soft September day. There was fragrant chocolate, and white, home-made rolls, fresh from the cook's oven, and rich, sweet cream, and the daintiest of sponge cakes; and the silver and the china and linen were perfect in their kind; and Mrs. Churchill, with the gentle, subdued expression on her pale face, was very kind and attentive to the young girl sitting opposite her, and wondering if it could be herself, Edna Browning, there at last at Leighton Place, amid all these signs of wealth and luxury, and with only Charlie's name and memory to remind her that she was not the Miss Overton she professed to be.

They went through the grounds that afternoon. It was a habit of Mrs. Churchill's to walk every day, and she asked Edna to accompany her, and leaned upon her as she went, and began talking to her of Charlie, her poor boy, who was killed.

It would be difficult to tell just what Edna's emotions were as she stood by Charlie's grave. She never lost a word of what Mrs. Churchill was saying of her boy, or failed to observe how sedulously any mention of Charlie's wife was at first avoided. After a little, however, Mrs. Churchill said:

"As you are to be one of the family, Miss Overton, you cannot well avoid hearing Roy, or some one, speak of it, and so I may as well tell you that Charlie left a wife—a very young girl, to whom he had been married that very same day. Edna was her name, and they tell me she was pretty, but I never saw her but once, and then scarcely noticed her. We don't know where she is. Roy cannot find her. She keeps her place of residence a secret from us."

"You must be sorry for that," Edna replied. "It would be so pleasant to have her with you—a daughter is better than a stranger."

"Yes, perhaps so," Mrs. Churchill answered, slowly; then, brightening a little, she said: "I did feel angry towards her at first, but I do not now; and I think I should like once to see the girl Charlie loved and died for before I am wholly blind."

There was something so sad and touching in the tone with which Mrs. Churchill said this, that Edna involuntarily walked swiftly to her side, with the half-formed resolution to fall upon her knees, and cry out:

"Oh, mother, mother! Charlie's mother! I am she! I am Edna! Look at me! love me! Let me be your daughter!"

But something held her back; and Mrs. Churchill thought that the hand laid so softly upon her hair was put there from sympathy only, and felt an increase of interest in this Miss Overton, who seemed so kind and gentle and delicate within in her attention.

They stayed an hour or more talking thus, for

Mrs. Churchill liked to sit there under the shadow of the evergreens, and then at last went slowly back to the house.

It was getting near dinner-time, and as soon as Mrs. Churchill dismissed her, Edna went to her room and commenced her own toilette for the evening. Mrs. Churchill had said Roy would be home to dinner, and probably bring some of the young people with him, and Edna experienced a cold, faint feeling at her heart as she thought of the ordeal before her, and tried to decide upon a dress appropriate to the occasion. Her choice fell at last upon a soft gray tulle, which had been made by Ruth Gardner's own mantua-maker, praised by Ruth herself as faultless. It was very becoming to Edna, for the brilliancy of her complexion relieved the rather sober hue, while a bit of scarlet geranium, which she fastened in her hair, heightened the effect.

"Will Roy recognise me, or that Miss Georgie Burton?" Edna asked herself many times, and as often assured herself that they would not. "Roy probably did not notice me specially in the train," she thought; "while that bruise on my forehead, and my terrible agitation and distress must have changed me so much that Miss Burton will never dream I am the girl she looked at with such virtuous wrath."

There was scarcely the chance of detection except through the hair, and as that, instead of falling negligently around her face and neck, was braided back from the forehead, and fell over a comb at the back of the head, Edna felt but little fear, and awaited, with some little impatience, the return of Roy, hoping devoutly that Maude Somerton would be one of those who might accompany him from Oakwood.

The table was laid in the handsome dining-room, and the dinner was waiting to be served, while far down the avenue Edna caught the gleam of white dresses and heard the sound of merry voices as Roy and his party drew near.

In her dress of rich black silk, with a soft shawl wrapped around her, Mrs. Churchill sat upon the piazza and kept Edna at her side, where she commanded a good view of the approaching guests, her heart giving a great bound of joy as she recognised Maude Somerton, tripping along in her usual careless manner, with John Heyford in close attendance. A little in advance of Maude walked a tall, straight, broad-shouldered man, whose manner proclaimed him the master, and whom Edna knew at once as Roy, and whom she scanned so earnestly as almost to forget the brilliant woman at his side, Georgie Burton, who, if Roy bore himself like the master, bore herself equally like the mistress of Leighton, and pointed out to one of the party, who was evidently a stranger there, some fine views. They were all in high spirits, talking and laughing, and so absorbed in each other as not to see the two ladies awaiting their approach, until Maude suddenly exclaimed:

"John! John! see, there is some one with Mrs. Churchill. It is, it surely is, little Dot!" and with her usual impetuosity Maude broke away from her companions, and bounding up the gravel walk, and the wide steps, caught Edna in her arms and nearly smothered her with kisses.

(To be continued.)

THE VEILED LADY.

BY THE

Author of "Fairleigh," "The Rival Sisters," &c., &c.

CHAPTER XLVII.

I LEFT the youth of the fiery heart dashing along the road, flying from the embarrassing affection of Don Santo and his family.

Nearer sounded the tramp of those in pursuit, and presently the words rose upon the air, in the voice of Don Santo:

"Forward! do not let him escape, a father speaks—forward!"

These words, uttered in thrilling tones of heart-anguish, caused the youth a pang; yet he had regard for his own feelings, and could not voluntarily subject himself to the trouble which he knew would ensue, should he heed them, and again striking his horse, he excitedly exclaimed:

"Onward, Leo, onward! once at the hotel, and I am safe!" As he spoke he turned, and under the snowy moonlight beheld a horse and rider within a rod, and coming furiously towards him.

The knowledge that he would soon again be a prisoner caused his fiery heart to flame, and standing erect in his stirrups, he cut his steed mercilessly across the ears.

These stinging and oft-repeated blows enraged the noble animal, and with a wild and terrible snort he threw up his head, and rushed madly on, while trees and earth seemed to fly; and the mild south

wind blowing against the young rider's face, seemed like the cold breath of the trumpet.

"Ha, ha!" he cried, in almost insane excitement, "we rush; nought but the wind or Heaven's lightning can outspeed us; bless you, my steed—bless you!"

And once more turning, he beheld those, who but a moment ago were so near to him, far in the rear, though they were urging their horses by word and spur.

And still the fierce animal thundered on, submitting to no control, but free and untamed as a tornado, and still the youth gazed about him with flushed face, heaving breast, and glowing eyes.

Further away sounded the voices of the pursuers, and dimmer upon the ear of the pursued rang the fall of iron-shod hoofs.

"On, on, mile after mile, and the horse slackened not his speed, but with every nerve quivering, his flanks dripping with foam, his eye gleaming with fury, and mane proudly erect, flashed on, on, like a meteor.

Anon peals of music were borne upon the air to the youth's ear, and away in the distance lights sparkled.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "we are near the hotel—oh, I hope Captain Linwood has not gone!"

And again thinking of his pursuers, he bent his head and listened. Far away in the rear he heard the steady tramp of approaching horses, and knew that they were still upon the trail; but confident that they could not reach him, he felt no fear.

A few moments more of rapid flight, and before him, with lights streaming from every window, and laughter sweet and rippling, mingling with music, soft and entrancing, echoing from the halls, was the hotel. He was very near; he glanced at his horse; could he stop him?

And apprehensive lest the excited steed could not be checked, he gathered up the bridle rein, and exerted his strength to the utmost, but 'twas fruitless, and with a wild and defiant neigh the horse flew on.

The youth's face paled, not with fear, but with grief, as he thought that he should be carried beyond, and perchance captured before he could see Captain Linwood. An instant more, however, and he was leaning his head upon the arched neck of the steed, and smoothing his mane, and speaking his name in low, soothing tones.

Wonderful change, potent kindness! The fiery horse became tame, his speed relaxed, and as he arrived at the door of the hotel he halted, and with a glad cry the youth leaped from his back, and darted into the house.

His progress was necessarily slow, as the entries were filled with loungers, and those who were resting from the dance. While forcing his way along, he was met by the landlord, who cordially exclaimed:

"Ah, Señor de Vega, you are here; many have been expecting you; but better late than never, you know."

Had the false idea been circulated about the country? The self-imposed question, with its host of inseparable contingencies, for a moment held him mute; then he hastily asked:

"Where is Captain Linwood?"

"Ah, your old friend? He and his lady are in the left wing, in the hall."

Thankful that they were not gone, the youth brushed through the crowds as fast as possible, and at length drew near the hall. He had no sooner placed his foot upon the threshold than several young men extended their hands, with the various remarks:

"De Vega, as I live!"

"Why, Enrique, how are you?—glad to see you home again!"

"The wanderer has returned, welcome him, boys!"

For a moment the youth stood petrified by these greetings; then moved on, with:

"Pardon me, gentlemen, I am in haste!"

"He is rather imposing," laughed one.

"Too much inflated to notice his old friends!" muttered another.

And thus they talked, some in ridicule, others in anger, but all deeply regretting that their former friend and companion should thus slight them.

With face pale from excitement, and his eyes glancing quickly and eagerly around the apartment, he walked on. At length he saw his friends, and rushing towards them, ejaculated:

"Come to the private parlour, quick!"

"What—Frank—pardon me, Señor De—"

"Good heavens!" he interrupted; "are you, too, infected with that idea? Come—come—come!"

Captain Linwood gazed upon him in astonishment, and then, turning to his wife, gravely said:

"Come, Helen, there is some mystery here."

She arose, and the three hurried to the private

parlour. As they entered, the youth suddenly stopped, listened, and then, while an expression of apprehension flew over his features, he cried:

"I hear the thunder of their steeds—they come! Captain, you must save me!"

"What is it, Frank?—why are you so agitated?" gasped Mrs. Linwood, in alarm.

"Oh, I have lived such an unnatural life since I saw you—lunatics, idiots, fanatics call me their son; you must tell them I am not."

"But pray be calm, my boy," said the captain; "your words are disconnected—you are not yourself!"

"I know—I know!" he hurriedly rejoined, "but I have passed through so much—you have heard that I had found my parents?"

"Yes—yes!" they answered, in a breath.

"It is not true, it is a chimera of their minds—an *ignis fatuus* they are blindly chasing—anything—anything, I tell you, but the truth!"

"What, is it really untrue?"

"Yes—yes, of course it is—don't you know it is? I cannot usurp another's place—make myself a fondled interloper, live a deceiver!—but hark, the Don comes, you must convince him of his error; I say you must!"

Captain Linwood and wife looked at each other, and then at the youth, who stood with quivering lip, fast-coming breath, and heaving breast. They knew not what to say or do, but seemed stupefied by the quick, nervous actions of the youth, and the strange and incomprehensible revelation which he had so disjointedly and spasmodically uttered.

Presently ringing foot-falls resounded over the entry, and the next instant Don Santo rushed into the room, his face flushed, and his hair hanging around his head in confusion. As he saw the youth he dashed towards him, clasped him in his arms, and mournfully said:

"Oh, my dear boy how could you leave your father—how could you?"

The youth broke away from him, darted to the side of the captain, clutched his arm, and, turning towards the Don, hastily replied:

"Don Santo, I have told you many times that I am not, nor ever was your son, but you, deaf to reason, would not believe it. I tell you the same once more, and call upon the friend at my side to prove it."

"What?" shouted the Don, in mingled indignation and sorrow, "can another tell me in regard to my own child? Oh, what sophistry! it only proves your insanity."

"Don Santo, please be calm," observed the captain; "this is a serious question, in which there is a misunderstanding."

"What do you mean, sir?" cried the Don, his Spanish blood effervescing. "I tell you he is my son, and he shall not go from me!"

"Never fear, my dear Don," interposed the landlord, who at that moment entered. "Senor captain is a very noble gentleman; it will certainly do no harm to talk the matter over."

"Oh, no," replied the Don, tremulously: "you must excuse me, captain; but a father's love often overrides his judgment."

"With pleasure," smiled the captain; "please be seated, Don, and we will discuss the subject."

The Don seated himself opposite the captain; the landlord drew a chair to the side of the former, while the youth sat between the captain and his wife.

"Now, Don," remarked the captain; "will you tell me why you imagine this youth to be your son?"

"He has every feature, every look," returned the Don, with a tinge of irritation in his tone; "and should not a father know his own child?"

"That I grant; but when did your son leave your house?"

"Six years ago."

"What was his age at that time?"

"Fourteen."

"Then he would be twenty now," mused the captain; "there is one point in our favour. You can see that twenty years have not passed over that brow."

"I can't see any such thing, sir," responded the Don, impatiently; "and I cannot listen to any more of this useless talk."

"Oh, tell him where you found me, and how?" interposed Frank.

"Ah, yes," assented the captain; "you will see your error, Don, when I tell you that I rescued this youth from the sea: took him from a boat, wherein he had been floating for days at the mercy of the waves."

"What does that prove, sir?" asked the Don, potently. "He had been gone over four years at that time."

"True, true," said the captain, somewhat per-

plexed; "but you can tell him your story, Frank, as you repeated it to us."

"He will not believe it," rejoined the youth, sadly;

"he calls it a fancy of a disordered mind."

"I know not what I can say to convince him, then," observed the captain, regretfully; "for that dates back to my first knowledge of you."

"Oh, if Mr. Tweed—if Dombey were here," ejaculated the youth, despondingly; "then I could satisfy him."

"Are these real characters that he speaks of?" queried the Don, "or are they creatures of a wild fancy?"

"They are both friends of mine," answered the captain; "but now, alas! both are dead."

"Ah, it's likely," said the Don, incredulously. "Now, sir, if you have done, I can show you that he is my son." Then to the landlord: "Do you recognise him, Senor Largo?"

"Yes, indeed," replied the host, "and did the first time I saw him; but he was under the care of Senor captain, and I, of course, had nothing to say."

The youth glanced appealingly at the captain. The latter sighed but said nothing.

"Now, captain, call in any of the dancers," observed the Don, "and you will see that they all know him."

"But he does not know them," objected the captain.

"But he did once, sir," retorted the Don, spirit-edly. "You say that you found him on the sea in an open boat over a year ago. Now, sir, I ask you, if the terror, and anguish, and despair produced by such an incident as that were not enough to turn the brain of any boy, make him forget his home, and talk gibberish about islands and tyrants? You see it is a monomania which has the sea for its subject, nothing else."

"I admit that the supposition is reasonable," replied the captain; "but the youth's intellect is perfect."

"Perfect to you, sir," repeated the Don, excitedly, "because you never heard him talk anything else; but to me, sir, it is lunacy, because I have heard him talk something different."

"Oh, captain—oh, Mrs. Linwood!" exclaimed Frank, imploringly, "you cannot believe this—you cannot!"

"My dear Frank," said Mrs. Linwood, in a low, soothing tone, "I have never doubted your intellect; but you must be calm; there is some mystery here. If you are obliged to return with the Don, you must bear it as quietly as possible."

"I will not go back with him; I will fight first!" muttered the youth, the thoughts of his late harassing life arousing his anger.

"Hush, my child," remonstrated Mrs. Linwood; "this is not heeding my counsel. You must accept with becoming grace all the dispensations of our great Creator. You have passed through enough to know that."

"I have—oh, I have!" he earnestly and penitently returned; "but you cannot imagine how it hurts me to have a foud mother bend over me, and give me love that is not mine to receive. It is my very honour that rebels against it."

"I know it, and I will make one effort myself." Then to the Don: "Did you ever have a negro in your employ, sir, called Dombey?"

"I never did, senorita," responded the Don, wonderingly; "but why do you ask?"

A faint hope arose in Mrs. Linwood's mind, and she rejoined:

"At the time we rescued the youth, the negro Dombey was a steward upon our vessel. As soon as he saw the youth he recognised him, though he could not tell where he had seen him."

"A happy thought, Helen!" commented her husband.

"I care not for such trifles," said the Don, peevishly. "An ignorant negro is no guide for me."

"But he is for me!" exclaimed the youth, offended at the other's contemptuous tone, "and if you had as much penetration as he had, you would know that I am not your son."

"You hear, senor captain, you hear," said the Don, in a grievous tone. "A son in his right mind would never speak thus to his father; he has caused me many hours of sorrow."

"The affair is complicated and inexplicable" remarked the captain, "but I am confident that you are in error."

"I cannot endure this," cried the Don, in blended anger and grief. "Senor Largo call some of the dancers in here, and I will prove to the captain that I am right."

The landlord bowed and disappeared; in a few moments here-entered in company with two blooming girls and two young men.

One of the young ladies glanced askance at the

youth, then moved quickly forward, and extending one of her white and shapely hands, modestly yet gladly said—

"Oh, Senor Enrique, you have come back again. I am very happy to see you."

"Senorita," answered Frank, politely yet firmly, "I know you not. Mark me well, and tell me if you are confident that I am he whom you imagine."

The young girl looked upon him in astonishment, glanced around the group, and then slowly replied:

"I know not why you speak thus, unless you wish to deny my acquaintance. One thing is certain, however, if you are not Enrique De Vega I never saw him."

"Nor I!" "Nor I!" "Nor I!" echoed the others.

Captain Linwood looked at his wife, but her face, as well as his, expressed nothing but regret and amazement intermingled.

"You hear, captain," said the Don, exultingly, "you hear the words of those who have known him from childhood; and if you have any more doubt it will amount to nothing, for I am about to return with him to his home, and—Heaven willing—revive his memory and love for me," his voice modulating into a reverential tone as he uttered the last words.

"I feel that he will be safe with you, Don," returned the captain; "and though I am certain he belongs not to you, still the law is in your favour. I have great regard for the youth, and wish for his happiness and prosperity."

"And must I return," ejaculated Frank, saddened at the prospect, "must I go where love is tendered me that is not mine, where life is but a mockery, and all the nobler feelings of my nature must succumb to a delusion nourished by those whose acts and words are but pangs that torture me?"

He paused, clenched his hands, and for a moment remained silent; then starting forward, he emphatically said:

"Again and for the last time, Don Santo, I swear that I am not your son, and I call upon all here to witness and remember my words. You oblige me to enact a false part, to usurp the place of your real son, and the consequences, whatever they are, must fall upon your own head. I have done my duty to my conscience and my Creator; now mould me in any form you will, but recollect that I am blameless, that I am innocent of helping you to deceive yourself."

Mrs. Linwood pressed his hand, and smiled approvingly, encouragingly.

"Poor boy," mused the Don, dejectedly, "he knows not what he says."

And the young people hearing the Don's words, glanced with compassion and sympathy upon him, and whispered among themselves how sad was the blight which had fallen upon poor Enrique's mind.

And parts of this reached the youth's ear as he stood in the centre of the group, his cheeks tinged with a crimson flush, and his dark eyes burning with the light of anger, which was only restrained from bursting forth by the sweet face of Mrs. Linwood raised pleadingly to his.

Don Santo gazed upon the youth for a moment as if studying his face; then advancing, he placed his hand gently upon his shoulder, and kindly said:

"Come, Enrique, bid your friends adieu, and we will return home."

"I am very, very sorry to leave you, Mrs. Linwood," murmured the youth, as he clasped her hand, "but I must go. A new ordeal, worse than I have yet experienced, I fear is in store for me. I shall try to be patient, and wait—wait." There was a peculiar sadness in his voice as he uttered the last words.

"Yes, be resigned, my dear child, be meek and calm, and may Heaven bless you, and protect you," responded Mrs. Linwood in a faltering voice.

He smiled faintly, and, turning to the captain, said:

"Farewell, dear friend; I never felt so sad at leaving you as I do now. If you should see Mr. Tweed, whose life Heaven, perchance, has spared, will you ask him to write to me? and you do so, too, please."

"I will," rejoined the captain, pressing the youth's hand; "and now, my dear boy, do as my wife has requested. We must all work out our destiny, no matter how crooked the path may be. I doubt not but that when you are prepared to receive happiness it will be vouchsafed to you."

"Thank you, captain," and, wringing his hand, the youth turned away.

"Senor Capitaine," observed the Don, "I thank you very much for the many kind acts which you have rendered my son. I hope you will pardon my seeming harshness and impatience, which only sprang from earnestness and zeal; and let me add, that I should be very happy to see you at my house at any time. Adios."

Captain Linwood replied in appropriate terms, and the Don, in company with the youth, withdrew.

Slowly the youth walked to the street, and entered the carriage, in which the Don had followed in pursuit. Silently he gazed out of the window as they moved along, and reflected with new and increasing bitterness upon his wild life. At length the reaction of his exciting ride, and subsequent agitation, came upon him, and exhaustion followed, which was soon succeeded by sleep; and, lying back upon the cushions, his jetty curls falling over his snowy brow, and his red lips slightly parted, he presented a picture of manly beauty, with delicacy and without effeminacy, seldom found. And yet his slumber was uneasy and disturbed by grim shadows.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

It is a short time the party arrived at the house which the youth had so lately left, and to which he now returned in unconsciousness, for heavy, yet uneasy slumber still clouded his senses. At times his facial muscles twitched nervously, as if his sleep was surcharged with visions, whose repulsive objects struck a dumb terror to his heart. Anon sickly smiles passed over his features, and unintelligible words escaped his lips in tones plaintive and weary.

The Don gazed affectionately upon him, sighed deeply, and shook his head mournfully, meanwhile murmuring:

"Dear Enrique, he is very tired, and I fear, almost exhausted. I am afraid I have not adhered to my resolution, to be silent in regard to his insanity. I may have wounded his feelings, and thus incited him to run away. I hope I have not, but I cannot tell; I have been so agitated since his return that I cannot analyse my feelings or account for my actions."

The abrupt cessation of motion prematurely closed his soliloquy, and he glanced at the youth to see if the sudden halt had awoke him. He was still sleeping. The Don nodded approvingly, and, opening the carriage door, said:

"Come, Zano, and help me carry Enrique into the house. We must not awake him if it can possibly be avoided, for he needs rest."

"I can take him in alone, Don."

And with these words the man approached, lifted the youth in his arms, and bore him to the house, though he staggered several times under his weight; and when he placed him upon the sofa, he declared that he could not have carried him a yard farther.

Donna Eulalie and Sylvia, who had been aroused by the shouts of the servants when the youth's flight was discovered, were still below, and now, with faces pale and hearts beating with the anxiety which true affection produces, bent over the youth and gazed upon him with apprehension.

"Darling brother," murmured Sylvia, "he is very pale and seems restless. See, mamma, his eyelids twitch at intervals, and his brow contracts as if in pain. Oh, I hope this excitement will not make him ill."

Donna Eulalie sighed deeply, clasped her hands, and without removing her eyes from the youth's face, answered:

"If I had been told of his derangement, this would not have been. The Don has been too stern, and excited the poor child's monomania into its worst form. If he had only told me, only told me," and her eyes filled with tears.

"It may not be so bad as we fear, dear mamma," said Sylvia, soothingly; "this is only the reaction. Papa would have told you all about Enrique when he first returned, but he wished to save you the sorrow which his words would have caused."

"Yes, I know, dear," replied Donna Eulalie; "but it would have been some relief to have had the pleasure of trying to revive his memory. I should have been sad, but it would have been better than the fancied security, from which I am now so rudely awakened. None know a mother's feelings, not even a father, who is next nearest."

At that moment Don Santo advanced, approached the sofa, looked for a moment upon the inanimate form, and then, with a melancholy shake of the head, remarked:

"His appearance is not encouraging; he must be removed to his room instantly. I shall recline upon the sofa, so as to be within reach should he be ill."

"Oh, no, papa; not you, but me," said Sylvia, coaxingly. "I can take care of him better than you can; and again, you will not be comfortable upon the sofa. Please let me take your place?"

"I hope, my child, that there will be no necessity for anything of the kind," responded the Don, with an assumption of cheerfulness, as he saw that his previous words had aroused his wife's fears. "I only spoke of it as a precautionary measure."

"And you do not think that Enrique will be ill, do you?" queried Donna Eulalie, anxiously.

"I hope not, dear wife," rejoined the Don; "he

seems exhausted only, and sleep will refresh him. Come, you and Sylvia retire, for you must be weary; it is now the second hour of morning. I will attend to Enrique."

Donna Eulalie hesitated, but after much expostulation from her husband, retired to her room. Sylvia begged to be allowed to sit up, but the Don was firm, and after some talk, she, too, sought her couch.

The Don summoned two servants, and the youth was carried to his apartment.

The Don disrobed him and placed him in bed, watched him a few moments, and lay down upon the lounge without undressing.

For some time he remained awake, but noticing no change in the youth's symptoms, he, too, succumbed to weariness, and fell asleep.

The hours flew on; morning dawned, and still the youth and his aged protector slept.

At eight o'clock Donna Eulalie entered the chamber, and glancing sympathetically from her husband, whose gray locks fell upon his wrinkled cheek, to the youth, whose hair in curls of midnight blackness fell over his snowy brow, she lowly said:

"Poor papa, he is very tired, and Enrique still sleeps; but how very white his face is—so white that it frightens me! and his lips seem not so red as usual," and an expression of fear hovered over her features.

Presently a groan escaped the lips of the slumbering youth; his brows contracted, and striking his arms against the counterpane, he shouted:

"Say yes, captain—be quick, carpenter—isn't the guitar sweet, Mr. Tweed? Domby, go to the port bows—jolly boat—quick—for your life; she is sinking—poor Falcon, poor Falcon!"

And his voice modulated to a low, moaning tone, and his features assumed that look of weary, staring vacancy, so frightful, especially in sleep, and rendered more so by the convulsive action of his muscles.

For a moment Donna Eulalie was transfixed with terror.

Real insanity had come at last, and as the awful realization rushed with all its dread force upon her mind, and caused her heart to beat furiously against her side, she cried in tones of anguish:

"Husband—awake, awake! Oh, my dear child! my beloved Enrique!"

And sinking into a chair, she wept bitter tears and wrung her hands in grief.

In an instant Don Santo was upon his feet, and while his face became ashy, he huskily articulated:

"What is it, wife? Speak—quick!"

"Oh! Enrique is wild—wild!" she murmured. "He has been talking so strangely. Oh, my child! my child!"

"Oh, papa—mamma—is he ill—is he worse?" And Sylvia stood trembling upon the threshold, her eyes distended, and her pale face bent beseechingly upon them, while her breath came in gasps.

The youth raised his head, looked about him with a cold, mocking stare, though his senses were still veiled with sleep, and then rolled up the sleeves of his night-dress, until his round, white muscular arms were bare.

A moment he remained thus, while all gazed upon him in dumb terror.

Anon his face became flushed; his eyes emitted a steady, ominous glare, his fists slowly closed, the cords stood out upon his arms, and suddenly he struck to the right and left, fierce blows that would have felled a giant, while from his lips, in tones hard and ringing, came the words:

"I will kill you—Oh, monster, fiend—Oh, oh! strike, coward, you have bound me! but there is a Heaven above, and he will let me live to punish you. Ella, he shall not touch you. What, strike a girl? He burned the chest on the black rock? The dastard!"

He ceased struggling, his face grew white again, his eyes partially closed, and in low, moaning tones came the words:

"All gone!—poor dear Falcon, my floating home, my dear home, gone down, down beneath the waves! And Domby—Mr. Tweed, where are they? where are they? Look again, captain—look again. Can you not see them? Oh, Mrs. Linwood—dear Mrs. Linwood—Helen, that is her name, Helen!—I tell you, Sam Wilton, you speak falsely!"

A spasm convulsed his frame, his muscles relaxed, a long, weary breath escaped him, and he relapsed into quietude.

Don Santo clenched his hands, and raised his eyes towards heaven; then, in hoarse, tremulous tones he murmured:

"Speak not; be calm, I beg of you, and trust in Heaven. Sylvia, go and get wet cloths, and apply them to his brow. I will send for Senor Reno."

And with grim foreboding agitating his mind, he threw one hasty, anxious glance toward the bed, and hurried downstairs.

Reaching the servants' department he hastily entered, and inquired for Vano, the coachman, and was informed that he had gone over the plain with the herdsmen.

"Oh, why is this?" cried the Don, in consternation, "why does everything work against me at this perilous moment? Go, one and all of you; bring him back; quick, I say—quick."

Two grooms started off to obey his commands, and the Don excitedly paced the room. How slow their motion seemed as he watched them, darting over the plain at the top of their speed. What issues hung upon their return. Would they ever come back? Oh, how the time dragged, and the youth growing worse every moment—it was dreadful. And the Don pressed his hands to his brow, and trembled as the suspense became more oppressive.

At length he could endure it no longer, and rushing out upon the lawn, and waving his hands, he shouted:

"Hurry—hurry—come—come!"

The men redoubled their speed, and gesticulated in reply.

"Oh, how slow they move—my boy, oh, my boy!" And the Don beat the earth with his feet, and strained his hands together.

Ten minutes had not passed since the Don left the youth's room, though to him they seemed hours.

Presently the coachman, accompanied by the two grooms, reached the house, and breathlessly exclaimed:

"What has happened, master, what has happened?"

"Don't talk," ejaculated the Don, "but do as I tell you. Zano, saddle Sylvia's horse and go for Senor Reno—fly; kill your horse if you must; but be back within a half hour. And you, Mayro, harness the grays in the phaeton—go to the hotel—bring ice—away, I say away! Oh, my boy, my boy!"

And standing with his hands clasped above his head, and his sorrowful eyes lifted toward the sky, while an earnest prayer went from his heart to Heaven, the good old Don wept tears of grief. Then his head fell upon his breast, his eyes were directed mournfully upon the ground, and he whispered:

"I must be calm and summon all my fortitude. Dear wife, how this will affect her! Oh, let me not think of it. I must be quiet—quiet!"

And repeating the last word as if to strengthen his resolution and arouse his endurance, he returned to the house and repaired to the youth's chamber.

He saw Sylvia bending over the bed and gently stroking the hot brow of the sufferer, while Donna Eulalie sat at the foot of the couch, her hand supporting her head, her eyes dim with tears, and her face wearing an expression of intense solicitude.

"Is he better? does he recognise you?" asked the Don, in an eager whisper.

"No, he is very ill," answered Sylvia, sadly; "his head is very hot and throbs violently. He has been raving dreadfully."

"Of what?" continued the Don, apprehensively.

"The sea," replied Sylvia, in a low voice. "And he has used such wild and threatening language. Oh, papa, it is awful," and she bent down and kissed the sleeper's brow.

"Yes," added Donna Eulalie, "and such plaintive moans and pleadings, and all the time his great black eyes were directed upon me so sorrowfully. Oh, my husband, it makes me weep to think of it even," and the tears rolled from her eyes down her cheeks and dropped upon her hands, which were clasped so tightly in her lap.

"Alas! it is as I said, the sea-mania, the dreadful sea-mania, which has turned his brain from home and friends to subjects weird and fanciful, and now threatens his life."

These words the Don uttered in tones audible to himself only, and then advancing, placed his hand gently upon his wife's shoulder, and tenderly said:

"Dear Eulalie, I fear that your anxiety will have an injurious effect. Sylvia will take care of Enrique. Come, and walk upon the lawn; you have not been out this morning, and you need fresh air and rest, for last night your sleep was disturbed, what little you had."

"No, no, my husband; I know the kind feelings that prompt your words, but I cannot leave Enrique. I feel better here than I should elsewhere, although my heart is so heavy."

The Don knew, by the deep, earnest tones of her voice, and by her eyes, which continually sought the youth's features with glances of love and compassion, that it would be useless to renew his attempts; and, with the hope that the sudden shock which her nerves had received, and the strain upon them which would naturally follow, would not have a deleterious effect upon her, he moved towards the window and gazed expectantly down the road.

Again the youth struggled, broke away from the grasp of Sylvia, and raising himself upon his elbow, and gazing around with those luminous orbs, which



[REAL INSANITY AT LAST.]

now burned with delirium's fitful and awful light, he articulated, in hollow tones, which swelled with a dismal sound as he proceeded:

"Lively, lads, clear away the deck-tackle; cut the running gear—ha, ha, ha! Yes, I will. Where is that carpenter? Now, strike quick and sure—cut away the main, stand by to ease her—now! Down, down! Mr. Tweed, your life is in danger! Shall I jump? She rights—dear, noble Falcon—good Falcon!"

And his eyes grew brighter, and he flung his arms and body wildly about.

The Don compressed his lips, and turned his back to his wife and daughter that they might not see the look of agony upon his features.

Anon, as the youth's delirium increased, the Don clasped his hands, and tried to repress the words that arose from his tortured heart, but in vain; sorrow in all its dread power held possession of his being, and forced from his lips the frantic cry:

"Oh, great Heaven! will they ever come? Time drags—life is at stake, and they are not here!"

Donna Eulalie trembled, glanced appealingly upwards, and feebly moaned:

"Oh, that this should be!—oh, that this grief should come to me in my last years!"

And as she uttered the last word, she pressed her hands to her head, which seemed to grow dizzy under the force of the emotions which shook her.

Sylvia spoke not, but with her face as white as marble, her lips shut firmly together, and her form quivering, she essayed to quiet the delirium which rendered the youth almost uncontrollable.

At times, as he looked at her, and laughed in that wild, shrill, unnatural way, she closed her eyes and shuddered; and then again, summoning her strength and courage, she bent over the couch and pressed soft kisses upon his face, while the tears welled into her eyes.

At last the sound of hoofs echoed on the road, and two horsemen dashed up to the lawn, the flecks of foam dropping from the flanks of their panting steeds.

Don Santo started forward, wavered, and then rushed towards the door, ejaculating:

"Oh, thank Heaven, the physician has come! Senor Reno is here!"

Mother and daughter mentally echoed his words, and fond hope kept their hearts from breaking.

Hurriedly the Don ran down the stairs; as he stepped out upon the lawn, the phaeton whirled up to the door containing Captain and Mrs. Linwood,

who, having been informed by the messenger of the youth's illness, had deferred their return to England, and decided to accept the Don's invitation.

The latter saw the phaeton, but noticed not its occupants. His mind and heart were centred upon one object—the youth; and his eyes rested upon only one person—the physician.

As the latter dismounted, the Don darted forward, caught his hand, and excitedly exclaimed:

"Oh, come, doctor—come; he is raving—mad—wild! Oh, come, for the love of Heaven!"

"Be calm, my dear Don," said the doctor, soothingly. "You must control yourself, or you, too, will need my attention. Everything depends in cases like this, upon forethought, calculation, and coolness."

"Yes, yes, that is all very good; but he is my son—my boy; and he is very ill—perhaps dying."

Senor Reno entered the house, and wishing to quiet the Don, said:

"I can sympathise with your feelings, but excitement will only aggravate your condition," as well as that of your son. Let me urge you to be composed."

"I understand that," returned the Don, tremulously; "but I am an old man; I shall never have any more children, and my boy is the hope and pride of my life. Do not wait!"

Senor Reno perceived that opposition would only increase the Don's excitement, and he volunteered no reply, but accompanied him in silence to the youth's chamber.

The Don entered first, and with the enthusiasm of a child, exclaimed:

"The doctor has come; take courage, my wife!"

"Papa," cautioned Sylvia, lifting her forefinger, "please speak lower; every noise jars Enrique's nerves."

"Your daughter is right, Don," observed Senor Reno, with professional command and sternness; "you must be quiet, or we shall be obliged to exclude you from the room."

"Pardon me," whispered the Don, while a look of anguish swept over his features; "but it makes me almost powerless, this dreadful event. Oh, doctor, will you help him?"

"Yes; Heaven willing!" responded the physician, and advanced to the bed.

A moment he gazed upon the sufferer, made an examination, and gravely said:

"Your son has encephalitis, or inflammation of the brain, and in one of its worst forms. It is

evident by the symptoms that his brain has been under a constant strain for a long time. The counteraction will be difficult, and attended by many contingencies. You will at once perceive the necessity of silence—silence in this room and in the house. Only those whose presence is absolutely necessary must be allowed here."

The Don heard this announcement with pallid face and quivering lip; then staggering toward the doctor, while his form shook as if palsied, he asked:

"Is there hope? Can—oh! can you save him?"

"The inflammation—if we can keep it in the cerebellum, where it originated, it will be better. He has more fever than usually accompanies encephalitis, and the latter may merge itself into that; it is desirable. He has a strong constitution, and is young; these facts are in his favour. I shall do all that can be done."

The Don bowed his head, and sank into a chair, while his wife, with her hands firmly clasped and face uplifted, spoke not, but seemed rigid with sorrow.

"Senorita Sylvia," remarked the doctor, in a low tone, "there are visitors below: your father, so absorbed in his grief, noticed them not. Please descend and welcome them. I will take care of my patient."

Sylvia looked up wonderingly, and then, as he repeated his words, she left the room and descended to the parlour.

Somewhat embarrassed and slightly mortified were Captain Linwood and his wife as time flew on and no one appeared to greet them, and equally anxious were they in regard to the youth. But now, as Sylvia entered, the former was dispelled and the latter increased.

"I address senor capitaine and lady, do I not?" said Sylvia, a faint, very faint smile flitting over her pale face.

"Yes," rejoined the captain; "and you, I opine, are Senorita Sylvia?"

"I am," she continued, "and I am very glad to see you. Enrique has called your wife's name several times to-day, and I wished you were here that he might be quieted. But, pardon me, I forget that you have been sitting here so long alone; and I hope you will excuse papa's inattention; he is nearly wild with grief."

"Certainly; one does not think of visitors, or aught else, when a dear one is ill," answered Mrs. Linwood. "But tell me of the youth."

(To be continued.)



[LADY VIOLET'S ANSWER.]

MYSTERY OF THE BLACK DIAMOND.

CHAPTER XVI.

If Lady Violet had any comprehension of Beatrix Dudevant's real motive, she would scarcely have invited her to Eaglescliffe.

She had formed the acquaintance of the gay London belle during their sojourn in Wales; Miss Dudevant was visiting one of their aristocratic neighbours; and in her girlish inexperience had been artfully courted and made much of by the polite and scheming beauty. Miss Dudevant had written that she would be at Chester Wednesday evening, but she did not come till Thursday. Lady Violet herself conducted her to the luxurious suite of apartments set apart for her use.

As she passed up the wide marble staircase, and through the stately pictured corridors of the noble mansion, she cast envious looks about her.

"It would be something worth manoeuvring for," she reflected, characteristically, "to become the mistress of grandeur like this. It's better than Lowndes House; and if the earl is old he is not a madman."

She glanced curiously at the young heiress of the Cliffe. Lady Violet was robed, as usual, exquisitely, and (which touched Beatrix Dudevant much more nearly), her dress was as costly as it was perfect in taste.

"Who else have you staying here now?" she asked, as she dropped with a soft and languid grace among some cushions and surrendered herself to her maid.

Lady Violet laughed.

"If you came expecting to meet company, you will be dull, I am afraid. We have no one but an invalid, Captain Evelyn, from the Nest."

Miss Dudevant gave a start that sent the ivory-backed brush her maid was using flying from her hand.

"Who did you say?" she asked, turning abruptly. Lady Violet repeated her words.

"Do you know him, Trix?"

Miss Dudevant did not reply at once. She sat buried in thought, and knitting her delicate brows as over a knotty problem.

"I beg your pardon. What did you ask me, Vio? Captain Evelyn? yes, I know him. We had a really frightful flirtation once. I wonder if he will remember me. Oh! you said he was an invalid. Then I shall not see him at dinner. Is there anybody to dress for?" she asked, languidly.

"There's papa," said Lady Violet, a little indignantly.

"To be sure. Any strangers, I mean?"

"None."

"Do you get up such a toilette as that only for your father?" asked Miss Dudevant, with a scarcely perceptible lifting of her dimpled white shoulders.

Lady Violet laughed again, as she glanced at her delicate dress.

"Why not? Papa likes me so."

"I wonder if it's for him or Captain Evelyn she dresses," mused Miss Dudevant. "But I shall soon find out. She's a wonderfully transparent minx."

Beatrix Dudevant was twenty-seven, but any one who did not know how long she had reigned one of the queens of London society, would have been puzzled to name her age. She passed for eighteen sometimes, with her diminutive stature, her large azure eyes, and soft, childish grace.

Notwithstanding the indifference she had affected about dressing, "seeing there was only Lord Eaglescliffe," she came down in an elaborate toilette of blue silk and sapphires, with her lovely hair floating in unconfined luxuriance over her dazzlingly fair shoulders.

Indeed, she had hoped that her indifference to dressing only for him would be repeated by Lady Violet to her father, and he would, perhaps, be piqued. It was part of her tactics to first excite a resentful interest in herself in the bosoms of those who were to be the objects of her artful wiles. She knew very well she was to meet no company at Eaglescliffe. She had come with far other objects in view than entertaining a fashionable clique and flirting with unavailables.

I doubt if a greater flirt than Beatrix Dudevant, in the true sense of the word, ever lived; and nothing is truer than that women of her stamp are more likely to die old maids than any other. Miss Dudevant had been on the point of marrying several times, but for some reason the match had always been broken off at the last moment. A very natural sensitiveness on the subject of matrimony had been induced in the coquette's mind in consequence, and she had resolved, while she could, to make a brilliant settlement in life—so magnificent a settlement, in fact, as should silence all detractors, and strike envy itself dumb.

Lord Eaglescliffe was indeed surprised into an extraordinary warmth of manner, for him, when this lovely creature floated up to him, with her most airy grace, and extending two of the softest, whitest little hands, expressed her delight at seeing him again, in

a voice that was as sweet as a flute note, and as caressing as a ring-dove's.

When the party broke up early that evening, Beatrix declaring herself weary to death—she always used a superlative term—this fairy new-comer stole back, as Lady Violet lingered to kiss the earl good-night, and with a mingled shyness and archness that made it doubly charming, held up her own rose lips for a good-night also.

Lord Eaglescliffe was taken by surprise, of course. What he thought of her, Beatrix could not gather in the one furtive glance she shot him through her golden lashes. His pale cheek flushed faintly; but the earl had always been a bashful man, so that was not singular.

"You don't grudge me his playing papa to poor little fatherless me, do you, Vio?" her caressing voice said, audibly, as she floated out of the drawing-room on azure wings.

Lady Violet's fine senses were a little shocked, but she did not say so, of course. Already, Beatrix Dudevant, despite her pretty, seductive ways, did not impress her so pleasantly altogether as in Wales.

With her father it was different. If his opinion of the London belle had been put in words, it would run something in this fashion:

"Very different girl from what she seemed in Wales—very different, indeed. My daughter's friend improves upon acquaintance."

"I wonder what sort of an affair a 'frightful flirtation' is!" mused Lady Violet, as she slowly paced to and fro in the perfumed dusk of her conservatory, while Fidele waited in the next room, to be dismissed for the night.

Those innocent blue eyes of Beatrix Dudevant discussed the costly belongings of her luxurious apartments that night with a true feminine appreciativeness.

"It couldn't be very hard to be an old man's darling for the sake of all this," she said to herself, with a soft smile, that curved her sensuous lips as sweetly as though it had been born of a more charming sentiment.

"I wonder what my lady would say," she mused; adding, as she curled sleepily away into her downy nest, "there must be a fine personal property, and no doubt the earl would make magnificent settlements, and then, more than that, if an heir should be born, my lady would go sailing higher than a Chinese kite, so far as the Eaglescliffe property is concerned. I won—"

And here Beatrix fell asleep.

CHAPTER XVII.

To return to Eleanor.

The amazement of the lawyers at the apparition of this imperial looking woman on the arm of Sir Jamieson was something worth seeing. The baronet himself, who had secretly flinched from the interview, drew his slight but handsome form more haughtily erect, as he saw the impression created by this wonderful wife of his.

"Lady Lowndes, Messrs. Layton and Dresser," was his brief, ceremonious introduction.

Eleanor felt as though she was acting in a play, as she sank gracefully into a seat mechanically offered her by one of the lawyers.

Sir Jamieson opened the business upon which they had come. The new Lady Lowndes had too much tact to take that upon herself; but she encouraged him with a prompting word now and then, and a magical glance. She managed, moreover, to give Messrs. Layton and Dresser to understand that Sir Jamieson had married a woman who appreciated the situation, and had not only the daring but the ability to meet it. She made them see that it would be decidedly for their interest to stand by the baronet in this emergency, and she behaved herself in so condescending and fascinating a manner, that she made both men believe that she considered them to be generously espousing a desperate cause, when, in reality, they had been made to feel that this was their wisest and only course now.

Then, not to make too protracted a stay, and because there remained still much to do, Sir Jamieson and Lady Lowndes bade the solicitors "good morning."

Madame was just alighting from a carriage drawn close to the kerbstone.

Sir Jamieson shrank slightly.

"For shame!" exclaimed Eleanor, in a whisper; and he was himself again.

Madame was simply petrified, as they swept by without a glance, and entered their own carriage.

"She will undo all that we have accomplished!" cried the baronet, as he dropped into his seat.

"She will not," answered Eleanor, emphatically. "Shall we go to your town house now, Sir Jamieson?"

The baronet caught his breath slightly.

"If you please."

Eleanor smiled.

"That is, if I dare," she said; "you shall see. It is somewhat fortunate that madame is out. We will give her such a reception, when she does return, as she little anticipates."

The town house was a sufficiently imposing edifice, in one of the fashionable squares, and were decidedly a look of occupancy.

As good fortune would have it, one of the maids was cleaning the marble threshold, and through the open door the true master of the house stepped without ceremony, accompanied by his mistress.

As she quitted the carriage, Lady Lowndes had said to the driver:

"Dispose of your horses, and come to the servants' hall as quickly as you can, and ask for Lady Lowndes."

Two or three servants in the hall started up in wild consternation at sight of Sir Jamieson.

Eleanor spoke for him in a slow, calm voice, her handsome, clear eyes meeting theirs reassuringly.

"Will you summon every servant in the house to come to us here? Sir Jamieson is married, and wishes to present his wife to them. I am Lady Lowndes."

The men hesitated slightly, but moved away.

Sir Jamieson leaned heavily on his wife. He trembled, and his countenance was ghastly with agitation.

"My husband," said Eleanor, softly, with a reassuring pressure of his hand: "trust me still."

"What if they should unitedly fall upon me, and drag me back to all I have escaped from?" almost sobbed the unhappy man, his spirit, so long cowed by brutal wrong, fainting at the thought of the danger he imagined.

Eleanor laughed softly.

"Whatever else you are, Sir Jamieson, you are not a coward; don't try to make yourself look like one in the eyes of your own servants."

The slight taunt stung him to self-possession, as she meant it should.

The hall was wide and large, with some ancestral paintings on the walls, and a few more modern statues in appropriate niches.

The servants gradually made their appearance by twos and threes, and assembled in the lower part of the hall, whispering among themselves. Presently Lady Lowndes observed with satisfaction that Rhodes, the coachman, was among them, and talking industriously.

"That man is really a treasure," she observed to Sir Jamieson.

Then she took a step towards the servants, her purse in her hand, with the united stock of gold

pieces of her husband's and herself, and spoke gently, yet with imperativeness:

"You have been taught," she said "to believe your master a madman. Do you think a lady like me would have been willing to marry him if he had been? Sir Jamieson does not blame you for the long wrong that has been done him. He retains you all in his service, unless any wish to go; and he doubles the wages of every man and woman who has done his or her duty by the end of the month. That is all; only Sir Jamieson and I would like to shake hands with you all around!"

When they hesitated, she drew her husband still towards them, extending her hand. Every man and woman, in the end, shook hands, both with the baronet and his wife; in a half-scared manner with the first, more eagerly with the handsome, smiling lady, who said a pleasant, musical word to each, and left a gold piece in each hand.

Finally they departed to their own regions again, and Rhodes did the rest of the business.

Sir Jamieson passed the (for him) trying ordeal surprisingly.

"Will you show me over the house now?" Eleanor asked.

"If you like. That is a very pleasant room," pointing to a door on the right. "Had we not better go in there and watch for madame?"

"By no means. Madame will not be here for hours yet. Her hands are full of business, you may depend upon it. I wish to choose and install ourselves in our own apartments."

The baronet sighed more than once, as he conducted her from room to room.

"Some of these," he said, "I have not been in for ten, yes, twelve years."

Eleanor glanced about her with unconcealed pride and exultation.

"It seems like a dream," she said, "that I should be mistress of all this splendour. It is true, is it not?" playfully looking up at her husband. "You are Sir Jamieson Lowndes, and I am your wife?"

"It is I who am dreaming," said Sir Jamieson, in a melancholy tone. "I shall wake presently in my lonely turret, bound hand and foot, in the power of my brutal keeper, with madame jeering at me in the doorway."

"If you do, it will be your own fault," said Eleanor, spiritively.

But the next moment she averted her face to hide the tears that would come.

Is there any sadder sight than to see one of nature's princes, as this man was, so cowed by misfortune?

Eleanor's boastfulness and exultation were assumed to win him from the morbid state of mind she saw he was in. Her unsympathetic replies were intended to irritate him into rallying from the depression which seemed to overpower him. For she foresaw that madame would make desperate efforts to re-obtain possession of the victim her long oppression had indeed well nigh driven mad, and that much might depend on his own show of spirited self-possession.

She detained him as long as she could make any excuse to do so, in examining the house, and chose her apartments from the numerous beautiful and luxurious rooms they visited, with a special view to interesting him in their selection.

But through it all he looked nervous and ill at ease, though he quite as evidently made the attempt to seem interested.

The chambers Eleanor finally chose were those which had formerly belonged to Sir Jamieson's own mother and father.

They were indeed among the handsomest in the house, and seemed quite recently to have been refitted. Later, Lady Lowndes learned that madame had prepared them for her own occupancy. As she led her husband at last within the beautiful sitting-room, they found a good fire lighted on the marble hearth. Lady Lowndes had quietly rung for a servant and ordered this to be done some time before.

She drew forward a handsome, velvet-covered sofa herself, and made her husband lie down. Then she took a low seat by his side and let her fingers wander with familiar soothing among the waving locks upon his attenuated temples.

He remained passive enough till a knock came at the door and Eleanor sprang to it.

It was Rhodes with a face of importance.

Lady Lowndes would have spoken with him apart, but her husband would not permit it. He spoke with something of the querulousness of the invalid, mingled with the fright of a scared child.

Eleanor yielded the point. It seemed that one of the servants who had been especially in madame's pay had slipped away unobserved by any one but Rhodes, who had followed him, and ascertained that he had indeed gone to her. Eleanor's brow darkened, but her eyes lighted to steel-like brilliance, as she thought:

"We shall doubtless hear very soon from madame now. Without that, she would have looked for us here last of anywhere, and I wanted Sir Jamieson to get a little more rested and tranquil before that."

The baronet had laid down again, and covered his eyes with his long, thin, white hands.

"If there are any of those fellows you have confidence enough in, Rhodes, I wish you would bring them into the next room, and wait there," Eleanor said.

"I think there are several, my lady," responded the man, respectfully. "They're mostly on your side, as much as they dare be. It is only the pluck, and some of 'em's got that, I fancy."

"You're too good a fellow for a coachman," remarked Lady Lowndes, enthusiastically; "we must do better than that for you. Meanwhile, before you do anything else, order a lunch to be served here instantly; anything cold there is, with some strong tea, and a bottle of wine—at once, mind—also, give orders that madame is to be shown into the green room when she comes, like any other caller."

As Rhodes quitted the room, Sir Jamieson uncovered his eyes.

"What a brave woman you are!" he said, his lips slightly trembling. "You don't know what a daring, bad, unscrupulous creature madame is."

"I do know, precisely, and I do not fear her in the least. If you will only pretend not to fear her, whether you do or not, we shall finish madame's business very shortly."

The thin white hands went up again over the thin white face.

Then he took them down again.

"I will try. I will, indeed," he said.

"You must not merely try, you must do it."

"Even if she comes with law and with force?"

"Even then." But Eleanor's lip curled scornfully.

"Force she may try. The law I am confident she will not dare meddle with just now."

To herself, Lady Lowndes said, more anxiously than she would have liked her husband to know:

"The only real fear is of the servants. If I dared leave him alone an instant, I would go and talk to them again."

CHAPTER XVIII.

By the will of that maternal uncle, who had left Lady Violet something like a quarter of a million of pounds, she came into possession of her money the day she was twenty-one. Till then, it was accumulating interest, but it was so tied up that she could not have touched a penny of it if she had been starving. She was even, by some extra tangle of the law, prohibited from raising money on her prospects, a fact of which Vane Conway had probably not been aware.

The heiress had never seemed to value money for its own sake, but she suddenly evinced an extraordinary interest in being the possessor, in her own person, of so vast a sum of money.

When the lawyers came down from London to render up an account of their stewardship, the beautiful client insisted upon meeting them, and acting for herself.

She remained in the library till the business was done, discussing all the hard details, and showing a clear-headedness that would have made poor Miss Miggs pale with delight to see.

Lord Eaglescliffe, indeed, knew less about the business when all was done than did his imperious and obstinate daughter.

Before the lawyers went back to London, they had, at the desire of this eccentric and arbitrary young lady, drawn up her will, which, she having appended her signature to, these gentlemen took with them on their return.

"Thank Heaven!" she said to herself, "uncle John left me the power to keep his money out of the hands of that man." And the next time Conway threatened her in that peculiar fashion of his, she wrote him back what she had done, and promised him solemnly that if he did not make himself contented with the handsome amount she was willing to allow him quarterly, she would convey away to some charitable institution every penny she could control.

It will be easy to imagine how the man ground his teeth over that unmistakably lucid missive, and with what elegant epithets he garnished the threats he fulminated against my lady.

"I might give the old earl a hint," he muttered to himself, darkly, "and I've a mind to do it. He'd plunk down something handsome for the sake of keeping me quiet."

He pondered a moment.

"There's only the danger of him sifting matters," he pondered again. "He might call on me to prove it, and where would I be then? No, no; my lady must pay up; and she'd better not be too high about it, or I may do the other thing to spite her."

As Lady Violet quitted her apartments the morning after Miss Dudevant's arrival, the nurse opened the door which led into Captain Evelyn's chambers, and looked out.

Lady Violet paused, looking down at the snowy folds of her dress. She had avoided the sick man of late.

"How is your patient this morning, Mrs. Lindsay?" she asked, in a subdued tone.

"He's getting na better, my leddy," the Scotchwoman said, sharply.

Lady Violet looked up, her beautiful face changing.

"Is he worse, Mrs. Lindsay? What has made him worse?"

"I did na do it, my leddy," returned the nurse, with her angry eyes on the arched ceiling. "I didn't come round the pair lad day in and day out, as sweet as na basket of posies ever was, and then quit off all of a sudden, and leave him to greet his heart sair."

Lady Violet could not affect to misunderstand her. Her sweet face paled as she said, a little nervously: "Could I go in and see him a minute now?"

"Ye can do as ye like, as ye ha already," said the nurse, indifferently. "I wish the man would come with the ice; he's been lang ene' to fetch it frae the North Pole."

Lady Violet passed meekly into the sick room; but she stopped aghast, midway. Captain Evelyn was raging with delirium.

Mrs. Lindsay whisked by her to the bedside with a bag of ice, which she bound on the sufferer's head, with many a "pair lad, pair lad!" and never a look towards Lady Violet.

"You should send for the physicians at once," said my lady.

"They've but just gone, my leddy. The two have been here a' night. It is na muckle any earthly doctor can do for him now."

Lady Violet's cheek grew whiter and whiter. She came nearer, and stood looking down at the tossing, muttering sick man, with a face of still agony.

Suddenly he broke forth into song. Captain Evelyn had a fine tenor voice. As he sang:

"But her hair is braided not for me,
Her eye is turned away;
Oh! my heart, my heart is breaking,
For the love of Alice Gray."

a faint shiver touched Lady Violet.

Mrs. Lindsay had retreated and stood with her regards ostentatiously bent in precisely the opposite direction from the invalid.

"I will na be a hindrance to her," she said to herself.

But Lady Violet, in truth, was scarcely conscious that any one else was in the room, as she drew still nearer, and timidly touched Captain Evelyn's hot cheek with her soft, cool fingers.

A vague feeling of self-reproach was agonising her. Was she indeed answerable for this unfortunate change in the sick man? Her heart throbbed guiltily—with a strange mingling of joy and terror. Did he indeed care so much for her that he had fretted himself to this at her absence?

"Darling! darling!" she murmured, with quivering lips. "I'm too wretched now to live almost. But I'd take twice the headache to save you one pang."

The tossing young soldier was quieter already. It may be that through his fevered brain had come unconsciously a knowledge of the sweet presence that he had craved for with a sort of madness of longing.

"I'll come back after awhile, Mrs. Lindsay," Lady Violet said to the nurse, as she turned away at last.

"She's been greeting, bless her bonnie een," said the delighted Scotchwoman to herself.

As Lady Violet came out of the sick man's room, she saw her guest waiting by one of the oriel casements, the light streaming about her, and upon the rich-hued marble which her slippered foot tapped impatiently.

"What a time you have been, love," she said, sweetly, holding up her childlike-looking mouth to be kissed.

Lady Violet just touched the rose-lips with her own, and then suffered Beatrix to curve a round arm about her waist.

"Did you rest well?" she asked, as they moved towards the breakfast-room.

"Splendidly, you precious creature. Isn't Captain Evelyn a very interesting invalid, Violet dear? I used to like him so much. He has such sweet eyes! Don't you think so? And he says such nice things; that is, he did when I knew him."

"I daresay," Lady Violet responded, with a faint smile; "he is much worse this morning, poor fellow!"

"She isn't a bit jealous," thought Beatrix, watching her through her silken lashes. "I presume she thinks she's sure of him." Aloud she said, in dulcet tone: "I feared so; you stayed in there such a long time. I was going in too, but I was afraid it might fatally agitate him to see me too suddenly; without warning, you know. We were such friends, and I never meant any harm by it."

They were in Lord Eaglescliffe's presence by this time, and Beatrix, with a triumphant glance at Lady Violet's now crimsoned cheek, floated towards his lordship with that soft, undulating movement which was her peculiarity. A subtle perfume, that seemed to accord with her dangerous beauty, exhaled from her floating draperies as she moved: her blue eyes were cloudless as a child's; her laugh sweet and untroubled. She crossed her slight hands on the earl's arm, and almost brushed his shoulder with her delicate cheek, as she stood a moment on the marble hearth beside him, and looked up into his face.

A sharp pang smote Lord Eaglescliffe's heart as his eyes dwelt on this dazzling, insinuating loveliness—a pang of warning, maybe, of the woe which this soft, beguiling creature was yet to do him.

Lady Violet had passed to the table, and stood absently waiting, when the man came in with the letters.

Beatrix saw him first in the great Venetian mirror, which was over the elaborately sculptured mantelpiece, and sprang, with one of her childish affections, to meet him.

"I may give them out, may I not?" she asked of the earl, encircling the pile of letters the man emptied from the bag with her arms.

Lord Eaglescliffe laughed. Lady Violet came forward and stood beside her father, while her graceful friend, with pretty ostentation, glanced at each letter, and passed it to its owner.

The first was for Miss Miggs. Over the next, directed in a peculiar, smooth, curving hand, Beatrix paused with a momentarily startled look, and gave it to Lord Eaglescliffe, her blue eye following it curiously.

"Vane Conway's writing, or I never saw it," she said to herself.

Lady Violet, standing beside the earl, glanced carelessly at the superscription, and then, with a movement swift as light, snatched it from his hand.

Before Lord Eaglescliffe could utter a word, though not soon enough to prevent his recognising the writing, the unopened letter was blazing on the coals, and Lady Violet stood between him and it, her beautiful face in a white heat, her eyes glistening with desperation, defiance, the hurt rage of a stung lioness.

"Upon—my—word!" ejaculated Beatrix. "What an odd thing you are, Lady Violet!"

Lady Violet gave a little shudder, and then, with a constrained laugh, linked her arm in her father's.

"Breakfast waits," she said, lightly. "You know, papa, I said I should pay my own debts. Is it not ridiculous," to Beatrix, "that people should persist in sending in my bills to papa, when I have so much money of my own?"

Beatrix assented that it was, with as naïve an air as though she did not know that her darling friend was insinuating a falsehood.

Lord Eaglescliffe said nothing, and was pre-occupied all breakfast time, though he made some effort to reply to Miss Dudevant's graceful raillery. He scarcely glanced at his daughter once, as he sipped his chocolate.

"Did ever you know that prince of fiends, Vane Conway?" suddenly demanded Beatrix Dudevant, with a sweeping but innocent-expressed glance, that took in the sudden change in each of the two faces, before it settled ostentatiously upon the prospect outside the deep oriel window.

It was Lady Violet's voice which answered her so placidly that even her father lifted his troubled eyes to the sweet, proud face.

"We know Mr. Conway very well," Lady Violet said, leisurely. "He was an acquaintance of my cousin, Miss Lyle. He was transported, you know, for forgery," she added, while her voice dropped to the decorous level of conventional horror.

Lord Eaglescliffe looked puzzled, but inexpressibly relieved; and Beatrix, while she met Lady Violet's straightforward look as unconsciously, thought within herself:

"You carry it with a high hand, my lady; but I happen to know Conway's writing. That letter was from him, and you're no better than other people, after all."

"Yes, I know," she said, in her saddest, most regretful voice. "Dreadful, wasn't it? He seemed such a gentleman."

Lady Violet was the first to leave the breakfast-room, excusing herself to Beatrix. Her father would fain have detained her, but stopping beside him an

instant to say what she knew would appease him, "I am going to Captain Evelyn, papa," she glided out of the room.

The earl looked after her with mingled wistfulness and satisfaction.

Beatrix Dudevant settled herself like a kitten among some cushions before the fire, declaring that she was cold; and Lord Eaglescliffe, beguiled by the enticing glance of her caressing eyes, drew his chair to the opposite side of the wide marble hearth. Beatrix pouted openly.

"I don't like folks to sit so far away when I talk to them," she said, in a dulcet sulkiness.

Lord Eaglescliffe laughed, and drew his chair beside her cushions.

"That will do nicely," nodded she. "You don't mind my speaking so, do you?" she said, sweetly. "You know you are darling, precious Violet's own best papa; and it seems just as if you were mine too."

The earl coloured. The draught was both sweet and bitter.

He had not forgotten the letter his daughter had destroyed.

Every now and then, in the pauses of Beatrix's flattering chatter—for that was really the amount of it—his heart gave a pained throb at thought of that letter superscribed—he was sure of it—by Conway. Could Conway have returned? He had noticed the London postmark; or had some friend brought the letter so far and posted it for him?

Why should Conway write to him, and what did Violet destroy the letter for? She must, he reasoned, while he watched Beatrix's small witcheries, have some cause to fear the contents of that letter, knowing who it was from, or she must have thought it was from some one else, and feared its contents for some other reason. That it concerned any debt of hers he did not believe, more than Miss Dudevant, though it went hard to believe his high-spirited Violet capable of deliberate deceit.

Beatrix's flute-like voice broke in upon his musings.

"Speaking of Vane Conway," she said, affecting to be studying the coals, but, in reality, watching him from the ambush of her silken lashes, "they say he is back—in London."

It was pure assumption, but the earl started violently.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed, and added angrily: "He was transported for an offence her Majesty has never shown herself lenient towards. If he is back he must have escaped from the penal colonies, and the officers should be put on his track at once, if they are not already."

CHAPTER XIX.

"HAD I better come in? I think not, Mrs. Lindsay, if he is asleep," said Lady Violet, as she stood just within the ante-chamber.

"Ah! my leddy," pleaded Mrs. Lindsay.

With a faint smile, and a flush staining her delicate cheek brightly, Lady Violet entered the sumptuous apartment beyond, and took a seat near the couch of the sick man.

"He has na stirred sin' your leddyship was here," the nurse whispered, and retreated.

It was worth something to see the slow exquisite pleasure that dawned in the dark eyes upon the pillow, as they opened upon the sweet face which filled all the sick man's thoughts, sleeping or waking.

His lips moved.

"It is you, isn't it?" he said, feebly.

My lady stopped further speech with her soft palm upon his mouth.

"I shall go away, if you talk," she said, flushing again, as his fond eyes fastened on her face. "I have been sitting here several hours now, watching over your slumbers," she added, lightly. "I am going to stay a while longer, certainly."

Captain Evelyn gave a long, tremulous sigh, like one too happy. To have had his lips scaled so sweetly, he would have been contented to remain silent indefinitely.

Lady Violet did not again take up her rôle of avoidance of the too dear invalid, until he had begun to leave his room.

Lord Evelyn and his wife had meanwhile been summoned from The Nest by the dangerous illness of Lady Evelyn's mother, and at the urgency of Lord Eaglescliffe, and his own inclinations as well, the handsome guardsman remained at the park, in his rôle of invalid, some time after he might with safety have left it.

Lady Violet did not urge him to remain. Her father, and that creature of dangerous graces, Beatrix Dudevant, did.

Roy Evelyn was angry, moody, unhappy, wounded to the soul. What did Lady Violet mean by treat-

ing him with such engaging sweetness one moment, and coolly withdrawing herself the next? He was tempted to feign a relapse, for the sake of wooing those tender eyes to hover over his couch once more.

"The game is mine already," Beatrix Dudevant mused one morning, triumphantly, as, after a long coquettish idling with Lord Eaglescliffe in the grounds, she flitted away through the palace-like halls to her own apartments.

"Who would have thought that stately, stern old gentleman would have been so easily mellowed? But there are not many men can resist me, I have found."

Miss Miggs had been an involuntary witness of a part of the saunter in the shrubbery, and the pale little governess looked after Miss Dudevant, as she entered the house, with strangely repugnant eyes.

"She makes me think of a snake," she whispered to herself; "of a snake all yellow, and green, and black."

Beatrix went dancing in to her maid, Sparks, in a flush of radiance.

Sparks was a tall, thin-faced person, with small pretence to good looks, and something of her mistress's sinuosity of movement.

"Dear me, miss, how you do startle one," she said, getting up from a trunk she was unpacking.

"Never mind; shut the door and come here. I've something to tell you."

Sparks obeyed. Miss Dudevant made a confidant, when it was her humour, of her maid. The small belle's tongue was a very loose one, and wagged more freely to Sparks than any one else.

"How much do I owe you, you faithful, good child?" she asked, settling the bracelets on her round, white arms.

Miss Dudevant flattered everybody, even her maid, most adroitly. It was one of Sparks' ambitions to be young, hence her mistress kept her good natured by calling her "child."

"Two years and three months now, miss," answered Sparks, with a smirk.

"And when are you to have your pay?" with playfully uplifted fore-finger, as though she was putting a daily catechism.

"When you are married, miss, to some one with money enough to give me double for interest," repeated Sparks, obediently, with another smirk.

"Precisely. Now, Sparks child, if you want your money in less than three months, you've only got to mind me."

"Yes, miss."

"How should you like to be maid to Lady Eaglescliffe?"

Sparks stared. Then she smirked more broadly than ever.

"I should like it, miss, of all things," she said.

Beatrix nodded triumphantly.

"If I live you shall; and Sparks, in a quiet way, I want you to keep an eye on my lady that is—you understand?"

"Yes, miss."

"There's a secret of my lady's that I must get hold of. You might happen upon the letters before they are posted, you see; and I most particularly want to know who my lady writes to. In fact, I must know."

"Very well, miss," Sparks said, precisely as though she had only to go into the next room after the information her mistress wanted.

"My lady is a high one," Sparks ventured next. "You'd not like her to suspect what your—your intentions be, miss."

"I should think not, indeed. Won't I pay her off for some of her fine airs, if I ever have the chance. It'll be awkward, though, to have such a stately looking step-daughter, won't it? Will she make me look old do you think, Sparks?"

"Not she, miss. Nothing could do that. I believe if you was a grandmother you'd look just as young as you do now, with your yellow hair and white skin."

Miss Dudevant smiled complacently. She was inclined to think so too.

"You may dress me now, Sparks," she said. "I want my handsomest blue habit, and the hat with the blue plumes; I am going to ride with his lordship. Thank Heaven! my lady is playing nurse too industriously to go too. I could make him ask me to-day, if I chose," she concluded, with a triumphant snap of her small fingers.

Sparks, who was manipulating her mistress's wonderfully-tangled curls with extreme caution, muttered something about a "bird in the hand," but did not finish the sentence; for in a flash, as it were, the angelic creature under her hand seemed transformed into a fury—a small Hecate.

"You vile, awkward thing!" screamed she, flinging the brush after the wisely-retreating maid, "you would pull every hair out of my head if I would let you. Come back here, this instant. Sparks, I say, if you don't come at once—at once, mind," stamp-

ing her foot. "I discharge you, and bundle you off to the station within the hour."

The angry beauty had to come down to expostulation, and wanted to know if she was an ogress who ate people, before the maid, warned, perhaps, by previous experience, would come within her reach.

Miss Dudevant, it was well understood among her own servants, had a very peculiar temper. She had never kept a maid more than six months at a time, till Sparks came. Sparks "took" everything; her mistress's abuse, her secrets, and some pretty rich perquisites besides. She made the situation "pay," according to her own ideas.

"People wonder why I wear blue so much," remarked Beatrix, as she stood admiring her own wonderfully pretty reflection in the Dresden framed cheval glass. Good humour was restored, and the belle was looking her alluring prettiest in the soft blue riding-habit, which fitted her exquisitely. Two long foamy blue plumes floated from the jaunty cap, and mingled in charming contrast with the airy yellow curls.

"Why I wear blue so much, Sparks: isn't it silly; when the reason is, of course, because it becomes me most of anything. Could I have a better reason, I'd like to know? Blue deepens and intensifies the colour of my eyes; this shade especially; and it sets off my fair skin, too, and my yellow hair, as you call it, you wretched child. My hair is golden, Sparks; do you see? and so are my lashes. Look now, how they fall across my cheek, so. If you had been a man, Sparks, that look would have settled you."

Captain Evelyn had intervals of looking into Miss Dudevant's willing, coquettish orbs, as though he was seeking a vanished heaven of bliss there, when he was only trying to provoke a flicker of interest in Lady Violet's cold, sweet face.

My lady had not meant to watch him when he met the London belle; but she did so, involuntarily, in spite of her determination. She found herself compelled, as it were, to see the inexplicable look that darkened in his handsome eyes at the sight of Beatrix Dudevant, though he rallied instantly, and met her with his most debonnaire air.

"He tries very hard to hate me, poor fellow," murmured the beauty to Lady Violet, at a convenient opportunity; "as if I could have helped his falling in love with me, and as though I wronged every man I did not marry positively. But, then, men are so inconsistent," she added, after a pause, in which her soft glance had been watching this handsome, rejected suitor of hers, when he reclined in his invalid chair, and talked with Lord Eaglescliffe.

"Men are so inconsistent, Violet darling, she went on. "This one would like to coax me over all the old ground again, and then, if I refused him, call me an outrageous flirt, as he did before."

"Perhaps you would take pity on him this time," Lady Violet remarked, with a faintly-curling lip and a half-angered pule.

"I don't know. He is very handsome and very interesting; don't you think so?" Beatrix said, thoughtfully.

It served all Miss Dudevant's purposes to speak in this style habitually to Lady Violet.

In the first place, it diverted her unsuspecting friend's observation from her own designs upon Lord Eaglescliffe, to imagine her interested in Captain Evelyn. Besides, she cared enough for the interesting young soldier herself not to be able to see this queenly girl monopolise him unmoved.

When Captain Evelyn pretended to like to have her hovering about him with her pretty childish airs, placing a cushion for his foot or a pillow for his head, when he humoured her in sitting near her, she talking in a low, tender voice, and watching him with soft glances, the beauty was in her element; partly because she really did like this play at love-making, partly because she guessed that it wrung Lady Violet's heroic heart; and lastly, because it tortured Lord Eaglescliffe, who, in spite of her allurements, was strangely laggard in asking her to reign at Eaglescliffe.

The stately and still handsome earl was indeed hopelessly infatuated; but single-minded himself, never dreamed that this seemingly innocent and child-like girl could wish to wed with a man of his years, or that his rank and wealth could be a temptation to one so apparently favoured by fortune.

Lady Violet made no sign, but she suffered none the less. Hers was a volcanic temperament, and every glance of the man she loved given to another was like a portion of herself rent away.

She listened coldly to her father's raptures concerning Beatrix Dudevant, and somewhat surprised him by at last declaring with a vivid flash of her big black eyes.

"I hate her, and I don't want to talk about her!—there!"

Meanwhile, her proud face wore such a stony mask

that Captain Evelyn said to himself, that she had no more heart than a marble statue.

"She's a worse coquette than Beatrix Dudevant," he muttered to himself, angrily. "I don't believe she would go kissing sleeping men and whispering 'darling' in their ears for her own amusement merely."

And then, coming upon my lady one evening alone in the library, he met the liquid glance that was lifted to his so tranquilly, with such a vehement, half-crazed out-pouring of his love and his despair, as almost took her breath away. She listened with her face averted. But he could see by the firelight, the quiver of the slight hand she pressed to her heart.

She conquered her agitation very shortly, and answered him even with sarcasm:

"I suppose you are telling me this to keep yourself in practice, and I must say it is exceedingly well done. But Miss Dudevant might object," she said, lifting her beautiful eyes daringly.

He bit his lip till the blood came, too much hurt by the speech to detect the jealousy that prompted it.

My lady stood a moment, and moved towards the door. With a desperate look, Roy Evelyn placed himself between her and it.

"In London," he said, "they call Miss Dudevant very hard names for her coquetry. But I could find a woman outside of London whose heart is as much harder as her face is more fair."

"Captain Evelyn!"

"My lady, can you deny it?"

"Will you let me pass, Captain Evelyn?"

"Not till you have answered me," he said, in his madness. "I was not asleep those days when you used to come gliding into my room just before dinner. Do you remember how you lingered by my bedside, thinking I was unconscious all the time? My lady, what happened there was either the—"

"Was either a falsehood or the truth, Captain Evelyn," she interrupted, a strange smile on her perfect lips, a strange, passionate glitter in her eyes. "Will you call it what you please, and let me pass?"

He drew back involuntarily before that look, and the next moment she was gone.

Roy Evelyn stayed gloomily where she left him for a long time.

"I wish that villain had finished my business while he was about it," he muttered at last.

(To be continued.)

A PITHY SERMON TO YOUNG MEN.—You are the architects of your own fortunes. Rely upon your strength of body and soul. Take for your motto, self-reliance, honesty, and industry; for your star, faith, perseverance, and pluck, and inscribe on your banner, "Be just and fear not." Don't take too much advice; keep at the helm, and steer your own ship. Strike out. Think well of yourself. Fire above the mark you intend to hit. Assume your position. Don't practise excessive humility; you can't get above your level, as water don't run up hill—haul potatoes in a cart over a rough road, and the small potatoes will go to the bottom. Energy, invincible determination, with a right motive, are the levers that rule the world. The great art of commanding is to take a fair share of the work. Civility costs nothing and buys everything. Don't drink; don't smoke; don't swear; don't gamble; don't steal; don't deceive; don't tattle. Be polite; be generous; be kind. Study hard; play hard. Be in earnest. Be self-reliant. Read good books. Love your fellow-man as your Maker; love your country and obey the laws; love truth; love virtue. Always do what your conscience tells you to be a duty, and leave the consequence with Heaven.

MARRIAGE SETTLEMENTS UNDER THE NEW BANKRUPTCY LAW.—An interesting case came before Mr. Registrar Roche—re J. H. Riden—as to the validity of a settlement "alleged to have been made by the bankrupt in contemplation of marriage." As the settlement was executed only last September, it would of course have been void under the new law if it had been made after marriage, because made within two years of bankruptcy; but it is actually questioned as not *bona fide*, the bankrupt's father-in-law being trustee, and the settlement comprising several leasehold houses which the bankrupt had erected at Clapton. The application was made to restrain two actions of ejectment brought against the trustee in bankruptcy by the freeholder, who was also the trustee under the deed, until the claim to the property in the settlement had been disposed of. Mr. Registrar Roche, in granting the application, said "he was pleased to find that in this, the first case of bankruptcy prosecuted under the new law for the benefit of creditors, the trustee and the committee of inspection had taken such a deep interest in the discharge of their duty by calling meetings for the purpose of eliciting the circumstances under which the bankrupt had divested himself of a large amount of valuable property."



[CHARLES DICKENS.]

THE LATE MR. CHARLES DICKENS.

THURSDAY, the 9th of June, 1870, will become a date long and sadly memorable in British literary chronology; for on that day the mortal career of Charles Dickens closed suddenly and for ever. The commencement of existence, we know, is but the beginning of its end, and death the "common lot" of all humanity; yet, to feel regret and sorrow at the extinction of even ordinary and comparatively obscure and valueless lives is an uncontrollable instinct of our nature; and when one who was so widely famed and so truly valued as Mr. Dickens succumbs to the inevitable doom, regret and grief are proportionately extended and intensified.

In the demise of Charles Dickens, English-speaking people, not only in these narrow islands, but throughout the globe—all the world over there being those who speak the English tongue—have suffered the loss of a personal friend; for as such he was regarded even by those myriads of his countrymen who knew the great novelist only by his works, and who had never seen his face, nor listened to the sound of his voice. The people of other lands, too, who do not speak the English language, to whom his name was, as it was with us, "familiar as a household word," have sympathised keenly in the loss we have sustained by the decease of the most gifted and lovable writer of this century. The inhabitants of foreign lands shared with us in the enjoyment which his pen produced, and they have shared with us in our sorrow at the sudden extinction of a great centre of mental life and light. Thus the loss is not merely personal, not merely national, but universal. The pen of the deceased writer, indeed, was a wand with which he touched the hearts of all: none knew better than he that, whatever may be the accidental difference of race,

or clime, or degree, the human heart is the same everywhere: he was a master who knew where all its finest chords were latent, and how to touch them to fine issues; who had an ear attuned to catch the "still, sad music" that undertones all human life, but is saddest and deepest in the lower classes of the social scale, and the genius to embody his knowledge in those diversified individual and characteristic creations which exist in his works, and have delighted the universe. In losing him the world has lost a great and beneficent genius, but history has gained a great and illustrious name.

The facts of Mr. Dickens's biography may be briefly given. He was the son of Mr. John Dickens, who held a position in the Naval Pay Department, and was born at Portsmouth in 1812. At the close of the war his father retired on a pension, and came to London as parliamentary reporter for one of the daily papers. Charles, who was placed as a clerk in an attorney's office, was induced by a strong literary bias to obtain an engagement as a reporter on the staff of the *Morning Chronicle*, then in the zenith of its fame, under Mr. John Black. The editor, noticing his readiness and versatility, gave him an opportunity for the display of his abilities by inserting in his journal those "Sketches of English Life and Character," which were re-printed in a collected form, under the title of "Sketches by Boz," in 1836-7. It is not generally known that, in 1836, he published, under the pseudonym of "Timothy Sparks," a pamphlet (illustrated by Hablot K. Browne) aimed at Sir Andrew Agnew and the extreme Sabbatarian clique, entitled "Sunday under Three Heads: As it Is; As Sabbath Bills would make it; As it might be made." His first attempt at writing for the stage was a farce called "The Strange Gentleman," which was played at the St. James's Theatre, in September, 1836, and in December following his "Village Coquette," a comic opera, with music by Hullah, was produced

at the same house; where also was played, in March, 1837, another farce by him, in which Harley sang a song in the character of Pickwick.

His graphic power of describing the ordinary scenes of common life, more especially in a ludicrous aspect, did not escape the notice of Messrs. Chapman and Hall, who requested "Boz" to write for them a story as a serial in monthly parts, and the result was the publication of the "Posthumous Memoirs of the Pickwick Club." The subject was treated in a manner at once so easy and natural, and with such a flow of genial humour, that the author found himself raised, almost at a single step, to the highest rank among living novelists. Illustrated at first by the pencil of Seymour, and, after his death, by that of Hablot K. Browne (Phiz), the "Pickwick Papers" had an enormous sale, extending to 40,000 copies; the name of the author was announced in 1838.

The great success of "Pickwick" naturally caused Mr. Dickens to receive a variety of offers from London publishers, and brought about his connection with Mr. Bentley, who engaged his services as editor of his *Miscellany*, in the second number of which, for February, 1837, appeared the first instalment of "Oliver Twist;" a portion of the MS. of which is still in Mr. Bentley's possession.

This story, which was published in three volumes at the close of 1838, lets the reader into some of the secrets of life as it was too frequently found in the parish-union workhouses, and in the dark haunts of thievery and villany which form so dark a blot upon London and the larger cities in the provinces. Admirably illustrated by the pencil of George Cruikshank, "Oliver Twist" at once became a favourite, and is still regarded as one of the author's happiest productions. "Nicholas Nickleby," which appeared in shilling numbers, uniform with "Pickwick," shortly after the completion of that work, was written to expose in detail the cruelties which were then, and are still, it is to be feared, practised upon orphans and other neglected children of the middle classes, at cheap schools, especially in some of the northern counties. Mr. Dickens stated in the preface that these disclosures resulted from a visit of inspection paid by himself to a school of the "Do-the-boys" class in the Wolds of Yorkshire.

In 1840 Mr. Dickens undertook the production of a story, or, rather, a series of stories, in weekly numbers. It was entitled "Master Humphrey's Clock," and included, amongst other tales, those since published in a separate form, under the name of the "Old Curiosity Shop," containing the episode of "Little Nell," so remarkable for its pathos and simplicity; and of "Barnaby Rudge," a tale illustrative of the senseless riots connected with the name of Lord George Gordon, in 1780. About the time of the publication of "Master Humphrey's Clock," appeared his "Memoirs of Joseph Grimaldi," the celebrated clown, almost the only production of Mr. Dickens's pen which deals with the plain prose of facts.

Soon after the completion of "Master Humphrey's Clock," Mr. Charles Dickens sailed for the United States, for the purpose of preparing himself for the publication of a work upon men and manners in the New World. Having visited a great part of the country, and accumulated a store of materials, on his return to England, in 1842, he published "American Notes for General Circulation." Many of the author's statements were controverted by our Yankee cousins, and the book provoked a reply, under the facetious title of "Change for American Notes." In 1844, "Martin Chuzzlewit" appeared in numbers, and in the summer of that year Mr. Dickens visited Italy, and many of the results of his observations were afterwards published in the *Daily News*.

Returning to England in the course of 1845, he suggested the foundation of a cheap newspaper, to advocate the spread of Liberal politics and secular education at home, and show itself the sworn enemy of despotic and arbitrary power abroad. Having organised a large literary staff, and surrounded himself with some of the leading writers of the day, he commenced the *Daily News*, January 1st, 1846, acting as the editor, and contributing to its columns his sketches from the south of Europe, under the attractive title of "Pictures of Italy," which were afterwards reproduced in a collected form.

Mr. Dickens soon withdrew from his editorial post and resumed his humorous serial publications. He wrote some stories of a more strictly imaginative cast, called "Christmas Books," of which the first, "A Christmas Carol," was published in 1843; the second, "The Chimes," in 1845; the third, "The Cricket on the Hearth," in 1846; the fourth, "The Battle of Life," 1846; and the fifth, "The Haunted Man and the Ghost's Bargain," in 1848. In addition to the above, Mr. Dickens has written "Domby and Son," published in 1847-8; "The History of David Copperfield," in 1849-50; "Bleak House," in 1853; "Little Dorrit," in 1856; and "A Tale of

Two Cities;" "The Uncommercial Traveller," and "Great Expectations;" the last three having been reprinted from "All the Year Round."

In 1850 Mr. Charles Dickens started *Household Words*, a cheap weekly literary miscellany, which he conducted for some years, but a dispute having arisen between him and his publishers, he brought it to a conclusion in 1859, and established in its place another, similar in plan and form, entitled *All the Year Round*, which he conducted up to the time of his death; and which will henceforth be conducted by Mr. Charles Dickens, junr. The first number of a new illustrated serial story from Mr. Dickens's pen, entitled, "Our Mutual Friend," appeared in May, 1864. The present year witnessed the commencement of another serial story, entitled "The Mystery of Edwin Drood," of which only three numbers had been published at his decease. We believe, however, that Mr. Dickens left this story in an advanced state.

Mr. Charles Dickens had a high reputation as an amateur actor, was one of the founders of the Guild of Literature and Art, and had been an active promoter of the Royal Literary Fund.

During the whole of the Wednesday preceding his death Mr. Dickens had manifested signs of illness, saying that he felt dull, and that the work on which he was engaged was burdensome to him. He came to the dinner-table at six o'clock, and his sister-in-law, Miss Hogarth, observed that his eyes were full of tears. She did not like to mention this to him, but watched him anxiously, until, alarmed by the expression of his face, she proposed sending for medical assistance. He said "No," but said it with imperfect articulation. The next moment he complained of toothache, put his hand to the side of his head, and desired that the window might be shut. It was shut immediately, and Miss Hogarth went to him, and took his arm, intending to lead him from the room. After one or two steps he suddenly fell heavily on his left side, and remained unconscious and speechless until his death, which came at ten minutes past six on Thursday, just twenty-four hours after the attack. As soon as he fell a telegram was despatched to his old friend and constant medical attendant, Mr. F. Carr Beard, of Welbeck-street, who went to Gad's Hill immediately, but found the condition of his patient to be past hope. Mr. Steele, of Strood, was already in attendance; and Dr. Russell Reynolds went down on Thursday. Mr. Beard himself remaining until the last. The pupil of the right eye was much dilated, that of the left contracted, the breathing stertorous, the limbs flaccid until half an hour before death, when some convulsion occurred. These symptoms point conclusively to the giving way of a blood-vessel in the brain, and to consequent large hemorrhage, or, in other words, to what is called apoplexy.

It would be vain to attempt to estimate the blank in the amount of intellectual wealth and enjoyment left by the loss of a writer whose works have afforded one of the chief sources of mental recreation to this generation. It has been truly said that the language of Mr. Dickens has become part of the language of every class and rank of his countrymen. The characters of Mr. Dickens are a portion of our contemporaries. It seems scarcely possible to believe that there never were any such persons as Mr. Pickwick and Mrs. Nickleby and Mrs. Gamp. They are to us not only types of English life, but types actually existing. They at once revealed the existence of such people, and made them thoroughly comprehensible. They were not studies of persons, but persons. And yet they were idealised in the sense that the reader did not think that they were drawn from life. They were alive; they were themselves. And then the atmosphere in which they lived was one of such boundless fun, humour, and geniality! No book ever was or will be like "Pickwick" in this respect, and Mr. Dickens wrote it when he was twenty-four. Age did not certainly improve Mr. Dickens's powers, for, as must necessarily happen, his works were very unequal, and some of his later works were his worst. But it is astonishing to think what an extraordinary wealth of creations of character of the first order of excellence he has left behind him. Not even excepting "Little Dorrit," there is no one of his numerous stories that has not touches of the master-hand and strokes of indisputable genius. To a degree unequalled by any other novelist, except, perhaps, Scott, he had the power of making the reader feel thoroughly at home in an imaginary world, and of being and living and moving in it naturally. No club of benevolent old gentlemen and a few friends ever went on as the Pickwick Club is represented to have gone on, just as no knights and barons and Jews and foresters ever went on as their representatives go on in "Ivanhoe." But the world of the Pickwick Club and the world of "Ivanhoe" seem not merely entertaining and natural, but actually existing to the reader. And of all great novelists Mr. Dickens was far the easiest to read and re-read. "Pickwick" and "Martin

Chuzzlewit" are exactly as entertaining the fortieth time they are read as the first. The goodness of the fun, the delightfulness of passages we know thoroughly well in them, takes us continually by surprise, just as Falstaff is always better if we open the book than we recollect him to be. And then the characters of Dickens are drawn from such a wonderful variety of sources. Without vulgarity they give a body to what we may imagine to be the varieties and habits of character in sets of persons with whom we are unacquainted. Sam Weller and his Mary are the expressions of all that a boots and a housemaid are capable of being; and as to the United States, all that can be said or thought of that portion of the life led there which comes within the sphere of a novelist is to be found in "Martin Chuzzlewit." The characters of Mr. Dickens exist almost entirely in what they say, and this is the highest and rarest form of the art of the novelist. Balzac, for example, who on the whole has no superior and few equals in the composition of fictions, scarcely depends on the dialogue at all for giving a clue to the character; whereas Sam Weller, Dick Swiveller, and Mrs. Nickleby are scarcely known to us at all except by what they say. It is this peculiarity which perhaps has made the writings of Mr. Dickens so popular with persons of all classes, and all types and degrees of education. The sayings of the characters in them are recollected, but these sayings are themselves the constituent elements of the characters, and thus the characters of themselves become to the public a part of the public itself.

Undoubtedly the writings of Mr. Dickens had their defects, and he was far too great a writer to make any one hesitate to speak with equal freedom of these defects and of the prodigious merit of his best compositions. He was to some extent a mannerist and a sentimentalist, and he was often the victim of some little trait of look or character that he had assigned to one of his imaginary personages, and on which he loved to dwell with persistency and minuteness. In some of his later novels, too, there was an air of too much study of a particular effect, and a tendency to try to prove to himself and his readers that he was following rules of art which he had invented, and the following of which gave a virtue to what might otherwise be called tedious. But he did not over-write himself, and he never ceased to do his best. The story which he has left unfinished was full of life, interest, and brilliancy. The genius of no man can suffice to go on making great creations for ever, and no novelist has ever been independent of his experience and of his physical state, his spirits and his time of life at the period of composing. Even Shakespeare only drew one Falstaff, and some of his comic characters are only endurable because they are Shakespeare's. It is useless to pretend that the later writings of Mr. Dickens are equal to his earlier writings. After he was thirty-five he published nothing of first-rate excellence except "David Copperfield." Scott, on the other hand, published no novel at all until he was past forty. The difference was partly a difference in the class of fiction, but it was also due probably to the fact that the one writer began early and the other began late. There is no such thing as a boundless imagination, and the later writings of Mr. Dickens were not so good as the earlier because he had gone through the finest creations of character that it was in his mind to conceive. But even if it is admitted that his range of creation was proved to be inexhaustible, yet it is equally true that of characters neither sublime nor vulgar he had a greater range than any other novelist ever had. It is scarcely an exaggeration to say that twice as many of such characters can be named from the writings of Mr. Dickens as can be named from the writings of any one of even the first writers of fiction. And then in all the best of his works the story is good throughout. There is nothing that is dreary or dull or feeble, and the aspect of things presented to us is pleasant and cheerful. The workhouse of Oliver Twist, the den of Fagin, the school of Mr. Squeers, are all lighted up with the drollery and oddity and rapid touches of quaint vitality that enter into the description. In his later works, Mr. Dickens became too minute in his descriptions, and he was often over careful in describing what had no power to interest the reader. But in his best novels the amount of life and movement that is put into each chapter is wonderful; and evidently, as has so often been the case with men of high genius, his characters grew and unfolded themselves to him as they did to others, so that he did not so much create them as seem the organ of their creation. All his richest and finest characters keep getting better as the story goes on. Bailey junior or Mr. Micawber or Dick Swiveller were probably at first of as little importance to the author as they seem to the reader; but as they were introduced again and again they were found to have things to say that made them what the reader knows them to be, and the excellence of which was perhaps sometimes surprising to the author himself.

Mr. Dickens, moreover, was to himself always something more than an artist. He set himself a variety of tasks, the due discharge of which seemed to him of great importance. He had certain doctrines in morals which he wished to inculcate. He was bent on preaching the views of charity and tolerance which he believed it to be of great use to men to hold, and to hold firmly. Much of the liberalism of the present day in England, and of its peculiar type, is due to Mr. Dickens. So far as the exclusiveness of religious sects has died away in England, its decay may fairly be in a large measure attributed to the circulation of Mr. Dickens's works in the families even of the most exclusively religious people. That there is fun and goodness in all sorts of persons, high and low, and even very low, was a theme on which he loved to dwell, and which he brought home to all his readers by the example of the characters he delineated. There was also in all his works an unvarying respect for the sanctity of home and the goodness of women. To be liberal, to be fond of fun, and to like a happy, innocent home, was the type of excellence he has set before the generation which he has largely influenced; and possibly his sentimentalism, while it wearied some of his more fastidious readers, may have helped to produce a good moral effect on the wider world which he attracted and enlightened. He was also a just man, a hater of petty tyranny, of the despotism of "headlong," and the recklessness of the lower herd of schoolmasters. His evident sincerity of purpose gave a kind of dignity to his writings, and took away from them all air of coming from a man who was merely making merry to get money from the public. On one or two occasions he set himself to attack abuses of a larger kind, the existence of which filled him with real pain and grief; and even if he exaggerated the slowness of Chancery and the ineptitude of the Circumlocution Office, it was clear that he was attacking real abuses, which practical men since he wrote have striven hard to remedy, and satisfactory remedies for which are being only slowly and with great difficulty discovered. Lastly, he was an artist who was not only fond of his art, and proud of his success in it, but who looked on art as imposing duties and responsibilities on those who devote themselves to it. He always accepted the applause of the public as a tribute not only to himself but to the calling he pursued, and to the high aims with which it might be connected. In all this he never faltered; and death has now stricken him down at a time when he had lately abandoned a source of great profit in order to give himself up to doing what he thought most worthy of him.

There are, however, minds of such narrow nature that the very merits of an author, his mightiest gifts and his most special talents, only serve as food on which to nourish their prejudices. Such are they who, while forced to admit the wit, humour, and power of Charles Dickens, always added, "but he was vulgar." Yes, in one sense he was vulgar; he delighted in sketching the characters not of dukes and duchesses, but of the poor and lowly. He had listened to their wants and sorrows, seen them in their alleys and garrets, had learnt their accents and dialect by heart, and then, with a truth and liveliness all his own, he photographed them in his immortal works. In this sense alone was Charles Dickens "vulgar." He was of the people, and lived among them. His was not the close atmosphere of a saloon or of a forcing house. In the open air of the streets and woods and fields he lived and had his being, and so he came into closer union with common men, and caught with an intuitive force and fullness of feature every detail of their daily life. His creations have become naturalised, so to speak, among all classes of the community, and are familiar to every man, high or low. How many fine gentlemen and ladies, who never saw Pickwick or Sam Weller in the flesh, have laughed at their portraits by Charles Dickens! How many have been heartbroken at the sufferings of Oliver, been indignant at the brutality of Bill Sykes, wept over the fallen Nancy's cruel fate, and even sympathised with the terrible agony of Fagin in the condemned cell, who but for Charles Dickens would never have known that such sorrows and crimes, such cruel wrongs, and such intensity of feeling existed in those lower depths of London life.

We have heard it objected also by gentlemen that Charles Dickens could never describe "a lady," and by ladies that he could never sketch the character of a "gentleman;" but we have always observed that when put to the proof these male and female critics failed lamentably to establish their case. We are not denying that the true type of gentle life is to be found in the upper classes. Far from it. We only insist, when we are told that Charles Dickens could not describe either a lady or a gentleman, that there are ladies and gentlemen in all ranks and classes of life, and that the inward delicacy and gentle feeling, which we acknowledge as the only true criterion of the class, may be found

under the smockfrock of the ploughboy as well as beneath the mantle of an earl; and as proof that Dickens could describe both a "gentleman" and a "lady" we may cite two characters—we might adduce fifty—the character of Sir Leicester Dedlock, in "Bleak House," and that of Mrs. Steerforth, in "David Copperfield."

When a great writer, on his death-bed, was with his last breath instructing his children in the secret of his success, he said,—"Be natural, my children, for the writer that is natural has fulfilled all the rules of art." And this was pre-eminently the case with Charles Dickens. His great characters have struck fast root in the hearts of his countrymen, for this, above all other reasons, that they are natural—natural both relatively to the writer who created them, and to the station in life in which they are supposed to live. Like the giant Anteus, who revived as soon as he touched his mother earth, Charles Dickens was never so strong as when he threw himself back on the native soil of the social class among which he had been born and bred, whose virtues, faults, and foibles he could portray with a truth and vigour denied to any other man. That he was eminently successful may be proved by his works. He is gone, indeed, but they remain behind and will long speak for him. Every day will only add to the universal feeling that he wrote not for this age alone, but for all time, and that this generation, in losing sight of him, will hardly look upon his like again.

With the personal modesty which was one of his strongest characteristics, it was well known that Charles Dickens desired that no obtrusive "obsequies" should attend him when being carried to the finalbourne; indeed, he had signified his intention of being interred unostentatiously in St. Mary's Chapel, Rochester Cathedral. But at his decease the national instinct at once designated the only fitting final resting-place for such a man—Westminster Abbey. Therefore the dean and canons promptly placed themselves in communication with Mr. Dickens's family, suggesting that the Abbey was the proper place for his entombment, and, should they concur in the suggestion, expressing readiness to do everything necessary in order to carry out the arrangement. Most fortunately, it was found, upon referring to Mr. Dickens's will, that, although his instructions were explicit in forbidding all pomp and show, and all that "mockery of woe" which undertakers are at such pains to provide, he had not definitively fixed his place of burial; and therefore his family and the executors felt that it was open to them to concur with the national wish, if they could only insure secrecy as to place and time. This was arranged satisfactorily on Monday, the 13th June, and at an early hour on Tuesday (14th) the body was conveyed, almost before any one was stirring, in a hearse from Gad's-hill to one of the railway stations of the London, Chatham, and Dover line, whence it was forwarded to London by a special train, which reached the Charing-cross station punctually at nine o'clock. In a few minutes more the hearse, which was plainness itself, was on its way down Whitehall to the Abbey, followed by the mourning-coaches; and it is pretty certain that not a single person of the many scores who must have met the sombre cavalcade as it slowly moved along was aware that that hearse was conveying to its last resting-place all that was mortal of Charles Dickens.

In the first mourning coach were Mr. Charles Dickens, jun., Mr. Harry Dickens, Miss Dickens, and Mrs. Charles Collins.

In the second coach, Miss Hogarth, Mrs. Austin (Mr. Dickens's sister), Mrs. Charles Dickens, jun., and Mr. John Forster.

In the third coach, Mr. Frank Beard, Mr. Charles Collins, Mr. Overy, Mr. Wilkie Collins, and Mr. Edmund Dickens.

A few minutes before half-past nine the hearse and mourning coaches—the latter three in number—entered Dean's-yard, and the body was carried through the cloisters to the door of the nave, where it was met by the dean, the two canons in residence, Canon Jennings and Canon Nepean, and three of the minor canons. The choir were not present, and indeed, for the most part, were unaware that a grave had been opened in the Abbey, and that the sounds of the burial service were about to be heard there once more, more than half a year having passed by since the last funeral—that of Mr. Peabody. The service was most impressively read by the dean, all but the lesson, which was read by the senior canon. There was no anthem, no chanted psalm, no hymn, not even an intoned response, or "Amen;" but the organ pealed forth at intervals during the mournful ceremony. The earth was cast into the grave by the clerk of the works; the service ended, the mourners—14 in number, with perhaps as many more strangers who accidentally chanced to be present—gathered round the grave to take a last look at the coffin which held the great novelist's remains, and to place wreaths of immortelles and

other flowers upon the coffin-lid, and the service was at an end.

The coffin was of plain but solid oak, and it bore the simple inscription—"Charles Dickens, born February 7, 1812; died June 9, 1870." His grave, which is only between five and six feet deep, is situated about a yard, or a yard and a-half, from the southern wall of Poet's-corner; the spot was selected by Dean Stanley from among the few vacant spaces in that transept; and our readers will hear with interest that all of Charles Dickens that is mortal lies at the feet of Handel and at the head of Sheridan, with Richard Cumberland resting on his right hand and Macaulay on his left. His grave is near the foot of Addison's statue; and Thackeray's bust looks calmly down upon the grave of his old friend; Dr. Johnson and Garrick lie within a few yards of him; and the busts of Shakespeare, Milton, and a host of other worthies, from Chaucer downwards, each of them the glory of English literature in their day, are but a little further off.

Much disappointment was felt by the public at the suddenness and secrecy of the entombment of Mr. Dickens; but it will be felt, no doubt, by all thoughtful persons, that although the executors may have disappointed the public by keeping the time and place of his funeral to the very last so strict a secret, they did the one thing which would have been alike acceptable to the departed, and which has satisfied the wishes of the country at large.

The grave, by direction of the dean, was left open as long as the Abbey was open, and, as the news spread about London, many visitors went to Poet's Corner during the afternoon to take a last sad look at the coffin of the great novelist; but the grave was closed during the course of the evening.

At one o'clock the bell of Rochester Cathedral was tolled for the deceased. A vault had been prepared in St. Mary's Chapel, Rochester Cathedral—a beautiful chapel near the entrance to the choir, restored a few years since—for the interment of the deceased, and a vault was rapidly constructed. A number of men were engaged in filling up the vault with earth and restoring the pavement while the bell was tolling for the funeral.

On Sunday following the interment a funeral sermon on the life and works of Mr. Dickens was preached in the Abbey by Dean Stanley, to a crowded congregation.

The last words of great men have always a peculiar attraction; and in the following passages, from the last novel which Mr. Dickens ever concluded, there is a singular interest,—

"On Friday, the 9th of June, in the present year (1865), Mr. and Mrs. Boffin (in their manuscript dress of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Lammie at breakfast) were on the South-Eastern Railway with me in a terribly-destructive accident. When I had done what I could to help others, I climbed back into my carriage—nearly turned over a viaduct, and caught aslant upon the turn—to extricate the worthy couple. They were much soiled, but otherwise unhurt. The same happy result attended Miss Bella Wilfer on her wedding-day, and Mr. Riderhood inspecting Bradley Headstone's red neckerchief as he lay asleep. I remember with devout thankfulness that I can never be much nearer parting company with my readers for ever than I was then, until there shall be written against my life the two words with which I have this day closed this book—THE END."

It is a remarkable coincidence that just five years later, on the very same day of the very same month, the end came; and the reader will probably be impressed with Mr. Dickens's own account of the first approach, in the spring of last year of the beginning of that end:

"Once upon a time (no matter when), I was engaged in a pursuit (no matter what), which could be transacted by myself alone, in which I could have no help; which imposed a constant strain on the attention, memory, observation, and physical powers, and which involved an almost fabulous amount of change of place and rapid railway travelling. I had followed this pursuit through an exceptionally trying winter in an always trying climate, and had resumed it in England after but a brief repose. Thus it came to be prolonged until at length—and, as it seemed, all of a sudden—it so wore me out that I could not rely, with my usual cheerful confidence, upon myself to achieve the constantly recurring task, and began to feel (for the first time in my life) giddy, jarred, shaken, faint, uncertain of voice and sight, and tread and touch, and dull of spirit. The medical advice I sought within a few hours was given in two words, 'Instant rest.' Being accustomed to observe myself as curiously as if I were another man, and knowing the advice to meet my only need, I instantly halted in the pursuit of which I speak, and rested."

"My intention was to interpose, as it were, a fly-

leaf in the book of my life, in which nothing should be written from without for a brief season of a few weeks. But some very singular experiences recorded themselves on this same fly-leaf, and I am going to relate them literally. I repeat the word, literally."

"My first odd experience was of the most remarkable coincidence between my case, in the general mind, and one Mr. Merdle's, as I find it recorded in a work of fiction called 'Little Dorrit.' To be sure, Mr. Merdle was a swindler, forger, and thief, and my calling had been of a less harmful (and less remunerative) nature, but it was all one for that."

"Here is Mr. Merdle's case:

"At first he was dead of all the diseases that ever were known, and of several brand-new maladies invented with the speed of Light to meet the demand of the occasion. He had concealed a dropsy from infancy; he had inherited a large estate of water on the chest from his grandfather; he had had an operation performed on him every morning of his life for eighteen years; he had been subject to the explosion of important veins in his body after the manner of fireworks; he had something the matter with his lungs; he had had something the matter with his heart; he had had something the matter with his brain. Five hundred people who sat down to breakfast, entirely uninformed on the subject, believed, before they had done breakfast, that they privately and personally knew Physician to have said to Mr. Merdle: 'You must expect to go out, some day, like the snuff of a candle;' and that they knew Mr. Merdle to have said to Physician: 'A man can die but once.' By about eleven o'clock in the forenoon, something the matter with the brain became the favourite theory against the field; and by twelve, the something had been distinctly ascertained to be 'Pressure.'"

"Pressure was so entirely satisfactory to the public mind, and seemed to make everyone so comfortable, that it might have lasted all day, but for Bar's having taken the real state of the case into Court at half-past nine. Pressure, however, so far from being overthrown by the discovery, became a greater favourite than ever. There was a general moralising upon Pressure, in every street. All the people who had tried to make money and had not been able to do it, said: 'There you were!' You no sooner began to devote yourself to the pursuit of wealth than you got Pressure. The idle people improved the occasion in a similar manner. 'See,' said they, 'what you brought yourself to by work, work, work. You persisted in working; you overdid it. Pressure came on, and you were done for!' This consideration was very potent in many quarters, but nowhere more so than among the young clerks and partners who had never been in the slightest danger of overdoing it. These, one and all, declared, quite piously, that they hoped they would never forget the warning as long as they lived, and that their conduct might be so regulated as to keep off Pressure, and preserve them, a comfort to their friends, for many years."

"Just my case—if I had only known it—when I was quietly basking in the sunshine in my Kentish meadow!"

"But while I so rested, thankfully recovering every hour, I had experience more odd than this. I had experiences of spiritual conceit, for which, as giving me a new warning against the curse of mankind, I shall always feel grateful to the supposition that I was too far gone to protest against playing sick lion to any stray donkey with an itching hoof. All sorts of people seemed to become viciously religious at my expense. I received the most uncompromising warning that I was a heathen, on the conclusive authority of a field preacher, who, like the most of his ignorant and vain and daring class, could not construct a tolerable sentence in his native tongue or pen a fair letter. This inspired individual called me to order roundly, and knew in the freest and easiest way where I was going to, and what would become of me if I failed to fashion myself on his bright example, and was on terms of blasphemous confidence with the Heavenly Host. He was in the secrets of my heart and in the lowest soundings of my soul—he!—and could read the depths of my nature better than his A B C, and could turn me inside out, like his own clammy glove. But what is far more extraordinary than this—for such dirty water as this could alone be drawn from such a shallow and muddy source—I found from the information of a benighted clergyman, of whom I never heard and whom I never saw, that I had not, as I rather supposed I had, lived a life of some reading, contemplation, and inquiry; that I had not studied, as I rather supposed I had, to inculcate some Christian lessons in books; that I had never tried, as I rather supposed I had, to turn a child or two tenderly towards the knowledge and love of our Saviour; that I had never had, as I rather supposed I had had, departed friends, or stood beside open graves; but that I had lived a life of 'uninterrupted prosperity,' and that I needed

this 'check, overmuch,' and that the way to turn it to account was to read these sermons and these poems enclosed, and written and issued by my correspondent! I beg it may be understood that I relate facts of my own uncommercial experience, and no vain imaginings. The documents in proof lie near my hand.

"Another odd entry on the fly-leaf, of a more entertaining character, was the wonderful persistency with which kind sympathisers assumed that I had injuriously coupled with the so suddenly relinquished pursuit, those personal habits of mine most obviously incompatible with it, and most plainly impossible of being maintained along with it. As, all that exercise, all that cold bathing, all that wind and weather, all that uphill training—all that everything else, say, which is usually carried about by express trains in a portmanteau and hat-box, and partaken of under a flaming row of gas-lights in the company of two thousand people. This assuming of a whole case against all fact and likelihood struck me as particularly droll, and was an oddity of which I certainly had had no adequate experience in life until I turned that curious fly-leaf.

"My old acquaintances the begging-letter writers came out on the fly-leaf very piously indeed. They were glad, at such a serious crisis, to afford me another opportunity of sending that post-office order. I needn't make it a pound, as previously insisted on; ten shillings might ease my mind. And Heaven forbid that they should refuse, at such an insignificant figure, to take a weight off the memory of an erring fellow-creature! One gentleman, of an artistic turn (and copiously illustrating the books of the Mendicity Society), thought it might soothe my conscience in the tender respect of gifts misused, if I would immediately cash up in aid of his lowly talent for original design—as a specimen of which he enclosed me a work of art which I recognised as a tracing from a woodcut originally published in the late Mrs. Trollope's book on America, forty or fifty years ago. The number of people who were prepared to live long years after me, untiring benefactors to their species, for 50*l.* a piece, down, was astonishing. Also, of those who wanted bank-notes for penitential amounts, to give away,—not to keep, on any account.

"Divers wonderful medicines and machines insinuated recommendations of themselves into the fly-leaf that was to have been so blank. It was especially observable that every prescriber, whether in a moral or physical direction, knew me thoroughly—knew me from head to heel, in and out, through and through, upside down. I was a glass piece of general property, and everybody was on the most surprisingly intimate terms with me. A few public institutions had complimentary perceptions of corners in my mind, of which, after considerable self-examination, I have not discovered any indication. Neat little printed forms were addressed to those corners, beginning with the words, 'I give and bequeath.'

"Will it seem exaggerative to state my belief that the most honest, the most modest, and the least vain glorious of all the records upon this strange fly-leaf was a letter from the self-deceived discoverer of the recondite secret, 'How to live four hundred or five hundred years?' Doubtless it will seem so, yet the statement is not exaggerative by any means, but is made in my serious and sincere conviction. With this, and with a laugh at the rest that shall not be cynical, I turn the fly-leaf, and go on."

He did, indeed, turn the fly-leaf; but only to find—so to say—on the other side "Finis" written to the volume of his own life. His earthly work was done. It was done well. His genius has added to the stock of human happiness; his efforts have lessened somewhat the sum of human suffering and wrong; and it will form no small portion of the glory which attaches to his name that, although he wrote so much, he in his lifetime penned no line, no word "which dying he would wish to blot."

ASPARAGUS IN FRANCE.—The asparagus trade in France is an important one, and becomes more so every year. There are three regular kinds recognised in the Paris market—the early, or "Asperge en branche" as it is called, which is cut when it has reached two centimetres (four-fifths of an inch) above ground, the season for which generally commences about March 25th, when the bundle never costs less than 10 francs, or 8*s.*, wholesale; secondly, the intermediate, which requires no explanation; and, thirdly, the late kind, or "Asperge aux petits pois," which is usually cut up and dressed with sauce like green peas, and eaten either as a separate vegetable, or as sauce to certain meats; it is also much used in soup. Another kind comes from the South, it is long and green from tip to stump, and the flavour is excellent; but it is not the fashion in Paris; it is too cheap! Prize asparagus is grown of great size in the neighbourhood

of Paris, the maximum attained to at the present time being 8 inches in circumference, but a dish of such grass costs 40 or 50 francs. The consumption has grown enormous of late years. In 1820, Argenteuil, the chief place of its growth, near the capital, only sent to market about 5,000 bundles, now the produce probably exceeds a million. The price in Paris ranged the other day, at the wholesale market, from 15*s.* to 16*s.* per bundle. Except at the very commencement of the season, asparagus is constantly given even at two-franc dinners in Paris; it is served hot, with white sauce, as with us; but quite as frequently it is eaten cold, with a little oil, vinegar, salt, and pepper; and, although at first a little odd to an English palate, it is very good eating.

LADY BARBARA.

CHAPTER V.

THE sun was near its setting when Mr. Chessom rode within the open gates of the Grange, and halted at the porch, singing out lustily, as was his wont, for one of the stable-boys to come for his horse. The boy hurrying out, Mr. Chessom slowly alighted upon the porch, and as slowly moved towards the open hall-door. He looked tired and jaded, his bluff and kindly face wore a deeper flush than ordinarily, and his motion, deliberate as it was, seemed to fatigue him.

As he gained the threshold, Dora, radiant in a cool white dress, with a floating sash of crimson, came dancing down the broad stairs, as bright of face as if she had not been all day struggling with many and bitter anxieties, and as if at this very moment her heart were not aching with a dull pain.

With the quick eyes of love, she detected the squire's jaded and troubled condition, and she hurried to him, taking his hat, and welcoming him after a blithe and sunny fashion peculiar to herself.

"Now, papa," she said, in the soft, cooing way that Mr. Chessom loved, and likened to the murmur of birds in spring, "you've been riding in the hot sun again, and are tired out! You ought to take me with you to take care of you—men are such thoughtless creatures! No doubt you are hungry enough. Supper is all ready, or will be by the time you are dressed!"

Mr. Chessom fancied that there was a deeper tenderness than usual underlying Dora's gaiety, and that her eyes were even more loving than usual in their expression.

"Ah, you've missed me to-day, you midget!" he cried, delightedly, kissing her. "And that Wamer has been here too! There's no one can quite fill the old father's place yet—eh, Dora?"

"Oh, no, no, indeed!" cried Dora, impetuously. "No one can ever fill your place to me, papa!"

Her sunny face clouded over, and she broke from his grasp, running out upon the porch.

"Bless her!" murmured Mr. Chessom, half inclined to pursue her. "The little witch was in a strange mood just then. Perhaps she refused Wamer to-day! She'll tell me after supper. She has no secrets from me."

He paused for a moment, and then, as Dora did not return, he went up to his room.

It was cool and shaded. His garments lay out upon the bed ready for use. Dora had placed everything to his hand; she was fond of looking after him, and waiting on him in a pretty, motherly fashion; and his bath was soon taken, and his toilette made.

Then he descended in search of Dora.

She was not on the porch—not in the drawing-room. After a little search, he found her in the supper room, a cool room, with open windows, into which the hawthorn-scented air blew softly.

The table was spread with a tempting repast of cold fowl, ripe strawberries, a pineapple, a glass jug of yellow cream, a pot of fragrant tea, and delicious home-made bread. Dora took her seat behind the tea-pot, and proceeded to do the honours of the meal.

"Did you get your expected letter from Edmund, papa?" she asked, as the squire sat down heavily opposite her.

"No, Dora. He must be very busy, or out of town temporarily. But I shall surely hear to-morrow."

"You got your pay for the sheep, papa?"

"Yes, Dora, and lodged it in the bank—all but an odd fifty pounds, which I reserved for a gift to a young lady friend of mine," said Mr. Chessom, smiling. "There it is, Dora. You can buy yourself some finery with it. I believe that is what young ladies consider money made for—to buy fineries!"

As he spoke, he handed to her over the table a little packet of ten crisp new Bank of England notes, the whole comprising the sum he had mentioned.

"I don't need any money, papa," returned Dora. "I have plenty—"

"Take it," interrupted the squire, with good-natured peremptoriness. "As if one could have too much money! You are not obliged to spend it, Dora, if you don't want it. Money don't spoil by keeping."

Thus adjured, Dora took the money and crowded it into her little silver portmanteau, already of picturesque dimensions.

"I shall have to go to Horsham again to-morrow," said Mr. Chessom, after a little silence. "My lawyer was out of town to-day, but is expected home to-night. The doctor—"

He paused abruptly, with a startled look at Dora. She caught his glance, and a sudden sense of alarm crept over her.

"The doctor!" she repeated. "What of him, papa?"

"Oh, nothing, nothing," returned Mr. Chessom, with unnecessary haste, looking down at his plate.

"I have just called into the doctor's office for a tonic or something of the sort. My dizziness, you know, Dora. I don't know how I came to mention the doctor's name. I must be growing stupid. Mr. Wamer called, I suppose, this morning?"

Dora answered in the affirmative, blushing.

"And the young Mr. Weir, was he here?"

"He did not come in," said the girl, in a low voice.

"We met on the road, or rather, he overtook me when I was coming home from a walk."

"Did—did he say anything?" asked Mr. Chessom, eagerly. "Noel is a great favourite of mine, you know, Dora. Did he want to rob me of you?"

"Yes, papa; but I told him it could not be. I love Noel as a brother, and in no other way."

Mr. Chessom sighed; and then, the meal being concluded, arose from the table, holding out his hand to the girl.

Dora sprang up and took it; and they passed into the sitting-room together.

This was the family room, where Mr. Chessom lounged through the heat of the day, while Dora sat by the great west windows busy with her needle or crochet-hook.

The room was high and square, furnished for summer use, with a delicately-tinted paper on the walls, a few good paintings and proof engravings well hung, a yellow India matting on the floor, and graceful bamboo furniture, light yet strong.

"Sit down here, papa," said Dora, leading him to a high-backed bamboo chair by the window. "I will sit here at your feet. I have something to tell you."

She sat down on a hassock in the position she had indicated.

Something in her tone aroused Mr. Chessom's curiosity. He looked narrowly into her upturned face, and for the first time since his return noticed that she was pale, and that under all her brightness and gaiety she had a weary and sorrowful look.

"What is it, Dora?" he asked, with fatherly tenderness. "What troubles you, darling? Is it these lovers of yours?"

"Oh, no, papa," Dora murmured. "I only wish I might have no greater trouble than that of choosing between two suitors. Read that, father."

She drew from her pocket the note she had received that morning from Mrs. Narr. It was crumpled now, but Dora straightened it over her knees, pressing out the wrinkles, and then silently gave it into the hands of Mr. Chessom.

After a moment's search for his spectacles, Mr. Chessom commenced reading the letter, a dazed and bewildered expression on his face gradually deepening into a look of horror and consternation.

He read it through and again, as Dora had done.

Then also, as Dora had done, he crumpled the letter fiercely in his hand, but he did not look at her.

Instead, a fierce ejaculation, that came strangely from the lips of the kindly squire, broke from him, and he averted his face, looking out of the window.

A moment they sat thus, the beams of the sunset stealing in upon them and touching the girl's jetty hair with a golden gleam.

Then Dora's hand stole back again into the trembling hand of the good squire.

"Papa," she whispered, her soul in her voice—"papa, is it true?"

There was a moment of keen suspense—a moment of bitterest, sharpest agony—of breathless waiting—and then Mr. Chessom answered, huskily:

"Yes, Dora; the letter is true."

A quick, sharp cry broke from the girl's lips. All day she had struggled against her convictions of Mrs. Narr's veracity, but now every vestige of hope was destroyed.

"Oh, papa!" she cried, with a burst of uncontrol-
lable sobbings. "Oh, father!"

Mr. Chessom put out his shaking arm and drew her to his breast.

"It is true, Dora," he repeated, "but I never meant

"you to know it. I thought I could keep it from you always. You are as dear to me as if you were of my own blood—dearer even than my son. My wife loved you with a mother's love. You have been the light of our home, the sweetest drop in the cup of my existence. Is it needful that I should tell you this, darling?"

"I never doubted your love, said Dora, sobbing. "But I wanted to belong to you, as I supposed I did. And I have no claim on you at all. I belong to that hateful creature at the inn."

"No, you don't," replied Mr. Chessom, folding her closer. "You belong to me, and I shall never let you go from me, except to brighten some good man's home. A few pounds will buy the silence and the absence of Mrs. Narr—"

"But it won't buy back my lost happiness!" cried Dora. "I could have smiled at poverty; I could have borne griefs and misfortunes—but this!"

"Did you comply with her demands, Dora? Did you go to the inn?"

"Yes, papa; I went there and I saw Mrs. Narr. She told me a long story—how you and mamma saw me by the roadside, and how you took a fancy to me, and how you bought me of her. I tried to disbelieve it, and all the while my fears told me that she spoke the truth! I can't believe that I am her daughter, papa. If there is anything in instinct I ought to have felt kindly towards her. But I didn't. She seemed a decent woman enough, but she and I are no more alike than day and night."

"That is what my wife said," said Mr. Chessom, still in his husky voice. "She could not believe that you were the woman's child, and held to it that you were of another breed entirely!"

"But if I were, that would bring me no nearer to you, papa," said Dora, wistfully. "Mrs. Narr told me that she had the child of a noble family to nurse while I was an infant, and that the child died just before her flight—"

"It's just as likely her own died, and that she kept the nurse-child, for some reason or other of her own!" cried Mr. Chessom, vehemently. "I would believe anything rather than believe you to be her daughter. It is quite possible—"

"But not very probable!" interposed Dora. "Why should a feeble couple embarrass themselves with a child not their own? If they had lost their own little one, they would have left the nurse-child behind to be restored to its parents. Papa," she added, abruptly, "has this woman any legal claim upon me? Can she compel me to go away with her?"

"All she wants is money," replied Mr. Chessom, evasively. "I shall buy her off to-morrow, and send her away, so that you will not see her again."

Dora pressed his hand gratefully. She had been stunned by the terrible discovery that she was not Mr. Chessom's daughter, but already her buoyant nature was rising from its first depression, and she was beginning to look the fact full in the face and to make the best of it.

As may therefore be guessed, Dora was not one to give way to sentimental repining. She had a brave and resolute soul, and all its forces were aroused to meet this heavy trial upon her.

If she were not Mr. Chessom's daughter by right of birth, she was by the diviner law of love and adoption. He would not let her be taken from him, and she shared equally in the anguish her discovery had cost her.

She had lapsed into a thoughtful mood, when Mr. Chessom asked:

"Is Mrs. Narr over at the Hare and Hounds now?"

Dora answered in the affirmative.

"I'll step over and see her in the morning," declared Mr. Chessom. "This secret must be a secret still. My poor wife adopted a good many precautions—such as a long stay abroad and in the north of England—in order that no one might suspect you were not our own child. Edmund knew the truth, of course, and one or two others—among them young Mr. Weir, whom I told in a confidential mood, at a time when I wished to test his love for you."

"Then he knew the truth to-day when he asked me to marry him?"

Mr. Chessom assented.

Dora's cheeks flushed scarlet.

"And he was willing to marry a nameless girl?" she murmured. "He did not let me suspect that he even guessed at the truth. I don't think I ever did full justice to Noel, papa. He has more chivalry than I imagined. To marry a nameless girl, with he knew not how many horrible relations somewhere in the background, who would live upon him and disgrace him! I almost wish I had known it!"

"Would the knowledge have changed your decision, Dora?"

"No—no, papa—no!"

"Did Wamer offer himself to you to-day, dear?"

"Yes, father," was the whispered response.

"And you told him—"

"To speak to you, sir?"

"Do you think he will stand the same test that Noel did?" asked Mr. Chessom, gently, letting his large brown hand flutter softly over the girl's short hair. "Will he be as willing to marry Mr. Chessom's adopted daughter as Mr. Chessom's own child? I spoke to you of the wide disparity of rank between Felix Wamer, cousin and heir of Lord Champney, and Dora Chessom? The disparity is wider than you thought—"

"Yes, papa," said the girl, bravely, "the disparity is great, but I will never marry any man who does not know the whole truth, and who does not think that Dora Chessom herself is worth more to him than another woman with rank, title, and boundless wealth. I will never allow any one to marry me with a feeling of pity either, or of superiority," she added, proudly. "I am as good now as I was yesterday—as good as if I were a princess! You understand me, papa? I am not ashamed of my relationship to that poor woman at the inn, if she is honest and virtuous. I am ashamed of my relationship to her dead husband, for he was a drunkard, a forger, and a fugitive from justice. One need never blush for parents, however poor, if only they are worthy of respect!"

"I do understand you, Dora."

"I thought, perhaps, you would think me proud because I shrank from Mrs. Narr—because I can never think of her as my mother," said Dora, looking up into Mr. Chessom's pale, worn face with an impassioned look. "It was not pride that held me back from her. We are different. Like oil and water, we can never assimilate. But to speak again of Felix, papa, and Dora's voice grew lower. "I think he will stand the test. If he does not, I shall be glad to have found him out in time."

"You will not be a dowdless bride, Dora," said Mr. Chessom, tenderly. "All that I can settle upon you, I shall. I have not been well lately, and knowing that I must leave nothing to chance in a case like this, I went over to see my lawyer to-day about making my will."

"Oh, father!"

"As if I should die any sooner for having all anxieties off my mind!" said Mr. Chessom, with an attempt at playfulness. "The fact is, I have been too dilatory about this matter. I ought to have provided for you years ago, knowing that Edmund is not of a generous—scarcely of a just—turn. My son likes money better than ever I did," and he sighed, as if the fact pained him. "But the lawyer, as I said, was not at home. I shall see him to-morrow and draw up a will, leaving you co-heir with Edmund and quite an heiress in your own right. I shall leave you eight thousand pounds—the same as if you were the child of my blood. I shall tell all this to Mr. Wamer, since you wish him to know the truth. I want to see you married before I die, Dora. My little heiress would be a prize to Mrs. Narr, if there were no one to keep that woman at bay."

"Does the doctor think you ill, papa?"

Mr. Chessom hesitated. A look into the girl's pale, brave countenance seemed to settle any doubts he might have entertained on the propriety of speaking freely to her.

"You have had a great deal to bear to-day, Dora," he said. "Can you bear another shock?"

The girl gasped for breath.

"It is not—not the hereditary heart disease?" she stammered.

"I thought I was threatened with apoplexy," returned Mr. Chessom. "This dizziness looked like it. But our old family doctor says—be brave, Dora—that I am not likely to die of apoplexy, but that I shall, in all probability, go, as my father and grandfather went, of heart disease. There—there, Dora! Hush, darling! I may live a score of years yet. I shall no doubt live to see your children. Only the doctor warned me to beware of excitement, and to guard against it carefully, or he would not answer for the consequences."

"You have been cruelly excited to-night. You are excited now, papa!"

Mr. Chessom smiled faintly.

"A night's rest will set me up again," he said. "Lean your head against me—so, darling! I want to think a little."

Dora kept silence. The sunset glow faded from the western sky, and the soft shadows of the long twilight fell over the scene. The hawthorn breaths, the scent of roses, the spicy odours of the flower-garden, came in at the open window. They could hear the gentle lowing of the kine, as they were brought from the pastures to the large stable-yard to be milked, and with the sound was mingled the murmur of voices and the barking of the dogs.

But gradually the sounds died out. The twilight deepened into night, and the room was full of shadows. Then Dora, who began to feel her posi-

tion cramped, gently extricated herself from Mr. Chessom's embrace.

"Don't light up, Dora," he said, with a strange and new gentleness. "But play me something. Sing one of the songs I love best."

Dora went to the piano and played and sang a tender old ballad that had been in vogue when Mr. Chessom was young. She followed it by another and another, and an hour slipped away.

She then closed the instrument and went to Mr. Chessom, with a vague fear tugging at her heart-strings.

"Do you feel quite well, papa?" she asked.

"Quite well, darling. You had better go to bed now. It must be after ten. You have been a blessing to me, my daughter. You have been the sunshine of my life. Heaven bless you now and always as I do! Now, good-night, Dora."

He spoke softly, and kissed her with a strange solemnity.

"I'll make your portion all right to-morrow," he whispered.

"Are you going to bed now, papa?"

"Pretty soon. I want to enjoy the quiet peace and pleasantness of this hour. Go, Dora."

He put her gently from him. The girl went out from his presence with a weight at her heart greater even than it had been on his return.

She went up to her room, but not to bed. There was something unquieting in the very air. She wrote in her journal, balanced her housekeeping accounts, and then sat down by her window, listening for his step on the stairs.

An hour passed, and he did not come. Another hour, and the clock in the stable-yard rung out the hour of twelve.

Frightened, Dora stole out into the hall and listened.

"He must have fallen asleep down there!" she said. "The night air will hurt him!"

She listened yet more intently, and still heard no sound. Then she glided down the stairs like a spirit, and entered the sitting-room.

Mr. Chessom sat still in the high-backed chair by the window, with the soft night air blowing in upon him.

"Papa!" called Dora, softly.

He did not answer. For the first time in the girl's life, that kindly voice did not reply to her call. A vague terror convulsed Dora's heart.

"Papa!" she cried, her voice ringing sharply through the room like a bugle-call.

And still he did not answer.

Dora flew to him, but the form she clasped was cold and rigid. There was a smile on the still face—a smile frozen there. The lifeless, pulseless hands lay on his knees like hands of wax. The generous heart had ceased its pulsations. The fate of the Chessoms had stolen upon the noble old gentleman in a delicious peace and stillness; and Dora's best friend, her shield against sorrow, her bulwark against trouble, was dead!

CHAPTER VI.

ON the return of Felix Wamer to Horsham, after his visit to Chessom Grange, as described, he found awaiting him the message from Lord Champney, sent to him at his chambers in London, and forwarded to him by his valet.

To describe the emotions with which he read the telegram would be a difficult task. Rago and fear predominated.

"Was it for this I have kept by his side all these years, making myself his drudge and secretary? Was it for this I have toiled and planned? Why, at any time since he left her, Champney, proud as he was and is, would have come back and humbled himself to his wife, but that I artfully turned his receding thoughts each time into sentiments of pride and anger, and made him ashamed of his weakness. Gone to Saltair! I wonder if his proud wife took him back! I wonder if she has overlooked the past, and they are reconciled again. Oh, I could kill them both—the fools!"

He paced the chamber with furious step. His soul was black with passion.

"I can never bear it," he said to himself. "He asks me to come to him, and I will go! If they have made up," and he smiled darkly, "they can quarrel again. Both proud, both passionate; one cold as an iceberg, the other jealous as Othello; it will be easy to effect their separation again! A man couldn't ask better materials than I shall have to work upon—I must be at hand at once, as wise and vigilant as a serpent."

He hastened to pack his valise, and to prepare for departure.

"I'll write a note to Dora, telling her that my cousin has summoned me," he thought. "The little girl likes me as well as I like her, and I am sure of her whenever I choose to come back after her. Not a bad

speculation to secure the little heiress, who has as good blood as any in the county, if the squire isn't noble! I'll attend to business first, then lovely Dora and pleasure!"

He sat down at his table and wrote a note to Dora, giving her his address in Norfolk, and asking her to write to him.

Then, taking the letter and his valise, he hurried downstairs.

As he knew a train was nearly due for London, he hurriedly settled his bill, ordered his letter to be posted, and hastened to the station.

He was just in time for the up-express, took a first-class ticket, and was soon whirling over the rails on his journey.

It was early afternoon when he reached London.

Ascertaining that there was a connection by the Eastern Counties Railway, he took a cab and proceeded to the station, instead of going to his chambers.

He was fortunate in making the connection, and was soon again proceeding swiftly on his way.

It was night when he arrived at Norwich, and he drove to a hotel, where he quartered himself for the night.

It may be imagined that he slept little, and that his thoughts, while awake, were not pleasant. They roved from Dora whom he loved to the Lady Barbara whom he hated, not because she had wronged him, but because, as he expressed it, she stood in his way. He heaped imprecations upon the head of Lord Champney, cursed his own folly in having left his lordship to himself so much of late, and murmured:

"I'll set matters straight directly, or go to an asylum for imbeciles. To undo the mischief Champney has wrought in coming here shall be my first work. Then I'll marry my little Dora, and go into society. Won't the little wild rose create a sensation?"

He dwelt fondly upon the remembrance of Dora's beauty and goodness. If there was a pure spot in his foul heart Dora had taken possession of it. He loved to think of her stainless purity and guileless innocence. No haughty beauty or belle could ever have won his heart. Bad as he was in soul, he had always cherished an ideal which he had never found realised until he met Dora.

He fell asleep at last thinking of her, who at that moment was standing beside the dead squire.

He wakened early, descended to his breakfast, and then ordered a carriage to convey him the remainder of his journey.

In a little while thereafter he was on his way to the Saltair Manor.

It was about noon when the vehicle paused before the great brazen gates of the manor, and a boy ran out of the lodge swinging the key in his hand. The gates were unlocked and thrown open, and the carriage rolled through, going slowly up the avenue.

As on the previous day, at the hour of Lord Champney's arrival, there were groups of people leaning against the balustrade on the cliff, overlooking the sea, and other groups clustered under the trees.

"Got company, eh?" muttered Wamer, savagely, under his breath. "Invited guests to witness their reconciliation perhaps. No doubt I shall find my interesting couple in a state of blissful folly."

There was no trace of bitterness in his countenance, however, as he alighted at the porch and dismissed his carriage. On the contrary, he was as bland and smiling as if the occasion were the happiest in his life.

A servant met him at the door, and ushered him up to his room at once.

A few minutes later, he was joined there by Lord Champney.

His lordship was not the picture of a happy lover, or a reconciled husband. His face was gloomy, his manner moody and restrained. Wamer's heart grew lighter at sight of him, reading in his appearance an augury favourable to himself.

The false friend rushed forward, greeting the baron with effusion.

"I was never so amazed in my life, Champney!" he exclaimed, wringing his lordship's hand, "as when I received your telegram, which came to me this morning. I was down in Sussex, but made all haste to come and congratulate you on your restored happiness. You at Saltair! You happy at last in the possession of domestic bliss! With all my heart I congratulate you."

Wamer's acting was perfect. Lord Champney was touched by it.

"This is the man Willard Ames would have me believe as false and designing," he thought. "He little comprehended Felix."

His heart warmed to his cousin, and he returned his grasp warmly.

"And you have discovered what I have told you

all along," said Wamer; "that the Lady Barbara was never actually false to you? I would have staked my life on her purity, as I have said a thousand times."

"I know you have, Felix," responded his lordship, seating himself. "I have never imagined my wife to be 'actually false' to me, but I have believed that she repented her marriage and preferred another to me. And such a state of affairs I could never brook."

"But you have found out your mistake now, I hope?" asked Wamer, pacing up and down the luxurious chamber.

Lord Champney looked gloomily at his cousin, but did not reply.

Wamer began to see how the land lay.

"Are you not reconciled to the Lady Barbara?" he demanded, yet in a tone of friendly sympathy.

"No, Felix. I am here on sufferance. She has a house full of guests, and does not turn me out, lest scandal should ensue. We are polite to each other—oh, fearfully polite—but we see each other only in company. Her rooms are off another corridor, and overlook the sea. My room opens off this one, and is opposite yours. In short, Felix, we are as far apart as we have been at any time during all these years. She is cold and unforgiving, and I begin to fear that my errand here will be fruitless, and that the breach between us will never be healed."

"Oh, terrible! terrible!" sighed Wamer, in deepest apparent sympathy. "Let me appeal to her, Champney. Let me arouse her old love for you. Surely that love must exist still, no matter how small the flame. Let me—"

"No, no. I want no one to interfere between us," declared Lord Champney. "Barbara knows I love her with a mad, passionate love, as wild as it is hopeless. Yet she scorns and repulses me."

"But, since you so nobly forgive the wavering of her affections, why does she treat you so coldly?"

His lordship winced, as he responded:

"She cannot forgive me that I did not restore to her our child when she became convalescent and demanded its return. I refused for two or three weeks, you know, and the delay cost us the child's life."

"Yes, I know. The baby died at the Surrey Farm. Barbara cannot blame you for the child's death?"

Lord Champney nodded assent.

"Why, this is a shame—an infamous wrong!" cried Wamer, with the earnestness that would have compelled nearly every one to believe in his honesty.

"To blame you for the child's death! Her ladyship ought to be set right, she ought, indeed, Champney. If you will only allow me to speak to her—"

"No. I want no interference even from you," Felix, said his lordship, sorrowfully.

There must be something more in this than is apparent. Can the Lady Barbara—but no, impossible!"

"What is impossible?"

"That Lady Barbara should have found some one she likes better than you."

Lord Champney started slightly, and looked out of the window, which commanded a view of the lawn.

"Do I offend you?" asked Wamer, insinuatingly.

"If I am rude or rough, just check me. You see, Champney, you've been away a good many years. The Lady Barbara was in the prime of youth and beauty. No doubt she has had many admirers who have dared to whisper love to her, taking advantage of your absence. Could you expect that a lonely, unguarded woman could steel her heart to such admirers—"

Lord Champney threw up his arms impatiently.

"Felix, you torture me!" he said, hoarsely.

"Pardon me; I had no such intention. I would not for worlds add a single pang to a heart already anguished nearly past endurance. I will keep silence, my lord. You forgive my thoughtlessness?"

"Forgive me, Felix," said Lord Champney, his generous heart touched by Wamer's seeming remorse. "I am very irritable. And—go on with what you were saying. I know you mean well."

"Thank fortune, you appreciate my affectionate zeal in your behalf, Champney. You are my only living relative, and I have attached myself to you, so that if you were unhappy I should be miserable."

"I believe it, Felix."

"Speaking of the Lady Barbara," resumed Wamer, talking more slowly, and clasping one of his long whiskers caressingly; "of course she has been used, more or less, to society in your absence. I see she has company now. She is a woman fitted to adorn society, and could not be expected to become a recluse. And—but form your own conclusions, Champney. I know that if you should discover anything wrong, you will be merciful to your wife. I have spoken but to prepare you for a possibility

which may not have occurred, and which I hope may never occur. And now, shall I tell you of myself?"

"Yes; tell me what you have been doing down in Sussex."

"Courtng the prettiest girl in the kingdom," replied Wamer, with enthusiasm. "Prettiest! She is the most beautiful, the most radiant and airy little being that was ever seen!"

Lord Champney's gloom was lightened by a smile.

"In love at last, Felix!" he exclaimed. "Wonders will never cease. You in love! Why, I thought you invincible!"

"So I thought, too," said Felix, good-humouredly.

"Yet I've fallen a victim at last to a pair of dark eyes. The little girl I love, Champney, is no tame, insipid creature, but a spirited, sunshiny, buoyant girl, with a noble and generous soul. She will be a grand woman!"

"Who is she?"

"The daughter of a country squire. They come of a good old family, which was never disgraced by a single member. Her name is Dora Chessom."

"Dora!" repeated Lord Champney. "The name pleases me. Is she too young for you?"

"She's only seventeen, but she's not too young. I'll make myself young for her sake."

"My girl would have been about seventeen now," said the baron, thoughtfully. "My poor little one, who never had a name until she was dead! I had them cut the name of Barbara into the plate on her tiny coffin. When shall you be married, Felix?"

Wamer smiled bitterly.

"I hadn't advanced so far as that yet, Champney. Three hundred a year won't go far to support a family, and Dora's money must be settled on herself."

"Of course. But why haven't you applied to me, Felix?" said the generous nobleman, half reproachfully. "I will give you a house to live in, and settle upon you five hundred a year. On eight hundred pounds you are safe in marrying."

Wamer expressed his gratitude in warm terms.

"Always thoughtful of others, Champney! You touch my heart with your kindness. If I could only hope to repay you—"

"Do not speak of repayment. You pain me in so doing. I regard you as a younger brother, Felix, and shall be glad to promote your happiness."

Lord Champney regarded his kinsman with affectionate kindness. Despite the weakness of jealousy, the baron had a large and grand nature, and was full of generous impulses, of which Wamer had many times had the benefit.

It gave him a sad pleasure now to think that if his own happiness were for ever destroyed, he could help to build up the happiness of another.

And Wamer? He was planning how to stab the heart that trusted him! He was already preparing to deal the blow.

"I will write to Dora to-morrow," he said, "and tell her of your generous offer. You will be charmed with her, Champney. But now, to quit the grateful thanks that so distress you, tell me who is here. Any of our old friends? Any one whom I know?"

"First of all," replied his lordship, "there is Willard Ames—"

Wamer uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Ames and I are very good friends, too!" said Champney, smiling. "He is engaged to marry Ada Gower, Barbara's niece. He proposed to her this morning, and was accepted. The two—Ames and Ada—are the chief among those staying here, although Ada lives with her aunt. Then there are the two Ladies Howe—nice girls, and twins. Mr. Tiltinghast and Captain Burton, of the Guards, fill out the list, after counting you and myself."

"A very pleasant party, but I only know Ames and Burton. Is Effingham here?"

"Who?"

"Effingham, the handsome colonel, you know," laughed Wamer, a sudden gleam shooting from his eyes.

"Why, no. Why should he be here, Felix?"

"I don't know, unless to visit like the rest," answered Wamer, twirling his tawny whisker. "May want cheering up, you know. His wife died last year—"

"Ah!" said the baron.

"I didn't suppose, of course, that he was a guest in the house," said Wamer, carelessly. "I am not such a stupid as that, knowing how cut up he was once because the Lady Barbara refused him, just before accepting you. But a friend whom I met in town told me I would be sure to see Effingham down here. He has made a dozen visits to Cromer since his wife died—"

"Ah!" said the baron again, breathing heavily.

"Of course there's no harm in the colonel's coming down to Cromer. He told one of the fellows at the club that Cromer was a bit of the original Pars-

dise, and that he had found his Eve there! Effingham must be a romantic fellow. His Eve in a Norfolk paradise! Ha, ha!"

The stab had been dealt, and the false friend watched anxiously yet furtively to see its effect.

Lord Champney's eyes blazed, and his face grew strangely white. The stroke had gone home to his very heart. Yet he was too proud a man to openly show his heart.

"Effingham may have fallen in love with some Norfolk fisher beauty, or with a farmer's daughter," he said, with a quivering smile. "How he can stay in dull Cromer passes my comprehension!"

"It's a paradise to him, now that he is in love," smiled Wamer, well satisfied with the results of his nefarious work. "He may call here when he finds you are at home!"

Lord Champney's face grew stern. He arose and moved towards the door.

"I must go below, Felix," he said. "Come down when you are ready. It is near the luncheon hour."

He hurried out into the corridor, feeling strangely stifled.

"So Effingham comes often to Cromer," he muttered, his jealous passions all ablaze. "I have come home just in time. I can fancy who the Eve is who tempts him down here, although Felix had no suspicion. I shall watch Barbara like a lynx, and if— Oh, Barbara, my wife, false as fair! What is to be the end of all this? Shall I, like Samson, perish, bringing with me Barbara and those she falsely loves into a common ruin?"

(To be continued.)

FACETIE.

A HUSBAND two years after marriage met an old friend, who congratulated him upon his improved personal appearance, but said: "It seems to me you have grown smaller." "No wonder," was the reply; "ever since I saw you I have been coming down hand-somely."

"WELL," said an old gentleman the other day, "I have been forty-seven years in the business, and can say what very few can say after such experience. In all that time, my friend, I never disappointed but one single creditor." "Bless me! what an example for our mercantile community!" replied the person addressed. "What a pity that one time occurred: how did it happen?" "Why," responded the old gentleman, "I paid the debt when it became due, and I never in all my life saw a man so much astonished as the creditor was."

"Go away," said Muggins; "you can't stuff such nonsense into me. Six feet in his boots! Bah! no man that lives stands more'n two feet in his boots, and it's no use talkin' about it. Might as well tell me he stands six heads in his hat!"

A MAN lost his hammer. He gave one of his boys a sound thrashing for losing it. Not long after the father found the missing hammer where he had lost it. "Never mind," said he, trying to console the boy and his conscience, "whippings never come amiss."

MRS. RAMSBOTHAM.—Mrs. Lavina Ramsbotham writes to say that she is inclined towards Riddleism. She has already purchased all the photographs of the Clergy of St. Albans, Holborn.—Punch.

CATECHISM FOR THE HOME SECRETARY.

What difference is there between Cabs under the Old Law and Cabs under the New?

State the advantages to Londoners derived from the use of Flags on Cabs?—Punch.

GREAT BOON TO BIRMINGHAM.—There is no truth in the rumour that a subscription has been set on foot in Birmingham for the purpose of adorning that city with a statue of Mr. Lowe. It is, however, probable that a deputation of gunsmiths will wait upon the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and present the Right Honourable Gentleman with a verbal testimonial of their gratitude for the boon which he will confer upon their trade by imposing a tax on fire-arms.—Punch.

WHAT WILL THEY DO WITH IT?—They are advertising for Contracts for Supplies for the use of the Metropolitan Police. Amongst the articles specified is "Ship Chandlery." What can the Police or the Police Courts want with "Ship Chandlery"? We are completely at sea, unless it is required for the Thames Police.—Punch.

AN IRREPRESSIBLE CONFLICT.—A young fellow of Frankford bought a book entitled "The Language of Flowers;" and seeing therein that a Vine meant "undying affection," he bought a creeping plant in a hanging-basket, and sent it to his dear, with a note requesting her to accept it as expressive of its poetical sentiment. Unfortunately, this fair being had an almanac with "The Language of Flowers" in the back of it. Turning to the page, she was shocked to find that a "Vine" meant "Hopeless intoxication." She thought the young fellow meant to insinuate that she benumbed, and so she got mad;

and now her big brother is prowling around with a club, anxious to caress that young fellow's form. It is considered probable, by well-informed persons in Frankford, that an irrepressible conflict is impending.

"Why don't you wear your ring, my dear?" said a father, in a ball-room, to his daughter. "Because, papa, it hurts when any one squeezes my hand."

"What business have you to have your hand squeezed?" "Certainly none; but still, you know, papa, one would like to keep it in a squeezable order."

MY BEAUTIFUL CHILD.

BEAUTIFUL child! by thy mother's knee,
In the golden future what wilt thou be?
Angel, or demon, or god sublime,
Upas of Evil, or Flower of Time?

Dashing, flashing, madly down,
Weaving of horror a fairy crown;
Or gliding on in a shining track,
Like the kindly son that ne'er looks back?

Daintiest dreamer that ever smiled!
What wilt thou be, my beautiful child?

Beautiful child! in my garden bowers,
Friend of the butterflies, birds, and flowers;
Crystal and pure as the sparkling stream,
Goodness and truth in thy features beam.

Brighter, whiter soul than thine
Never was seen in a mortal shrine.

My heart thou hast gladdened two sweet years,
With rainbows of hope suffused my tears;
Wherever thy sunny smile doth fall,
The glory of God beams over all.

Beautiful child! to thy look is given
A purity less of earth than heaven,
With thy tell-tale eyes, and prattling tongue,
I wish thou couldst ever thus be young!

Tripping, skipping, humming bird,
Everywhere thy voice is heard;

In the garden-nooks thou oft art found,
With flowers thy bosom and neck around;

And when at thy prayers, with figure quaint,
Oh, how I love thee, my infant saint!

Beautiful child! what thy fate shall be
Is wisely hidden, perchance, from me,
A fallen star thou mayst leave my side,
And sorrow and shame may thee betide;

Shivering, quivering, through the street,
Wretched, down-trampled, cursed, and beat;

Ashamed to live, and afraid to die,
No home, no friend, and a frowning sky.
Merciful Father! my brain grows wild,
Good angels, guard my beautiful child!

Beautiful child! thou mayst soar above,
A warbling cherub of joy and love,
A wave on eternity's mighty sea!
A blossom on Life's immortal tree!

Flowering, towering, evermore,
'Mid vernal airs of the Golden Shore!

Oh! as I gaze on thy sinless bloom,
And thy radiant face that laughs at gloom,
I pray God keep thee so undefiled,
I pray Heaven bless my beautiful child!

M. W. A. H. S.

STATISTICS.

THE PROFITS OF YACHTING.—During 1869, Wylie's cutter Avon won 45*l*.; Major Ewing's cutter Concor, 55*l*.; Mr. King's cutter Denburn, 30*l*.; Mr. R. Ferguson's Fairlie, 20*l*.; the Marquis of Drogheda's schooner Ferida, 50*l*.; Mr. Boucher's cutter Fiona, 175*l*.; Mr. French's cutter Kilmeny, 90*l*.; Mr. Davis's cutter Mabella, 21*l*.; Mr. Houldsworth's cutter Mosquito, 85*l*.; Mr. Tennant's cutter Oimara, 390*l*.; Mr. Steven's schooner Persis, 50*l*.; Ripple cutter, J. M. Forrester, 20*l*.; Satanella cutter, D. W. Finlay, 30*l*.; Seud, 26*l*.; Surge, 40*l*.; Toroh, 15*l*. The largest sum (540*l*.) was won by Mr. Mulholland's schooner Egeria. The cutter Muriel won 407*l*.; Volante, 355*l*.; Sphinx, 305*l*.; and schooner Cambria (of the so-called International yacht race), 280*l*.

COURT FEES.—The fees received in stamps in the superior Courts of Common Law in the year ending the 31st of March, 1870, amounted to 91,518*l*., being 2,499*l*. less than in the preceding year. The decrease was chiefly in the Court of Queen's Bench; in the Exchequer there was an increase. The salaries, pensions, and expenses charged on the fee fund amounted to 98,043*l*., leaving a deficiency of 6,445*l*. The fees received in the Court of Probate and Divorce in the year amounted to 134,070*l*.; the payments for compensations (a decreasing account), salaries, &c., amounted to 180,073*l*., so that there was a deficiency of 55,003*l*. In the Admiralty Court the fees received produced 8,446*l*., but the payments charged on the fund reached 16,084*l*.,

leaving a deficiency of 7,638*l*. In the Land Registry the year's fees were 1,280*l*., but the payments were 5,684*l*., leaving a deficiency of 4,404*l*. The total excess of expenditure over receipts in respect of the Courts of Probate and Admiralty and the Land Registry (exclusive of the salaries of the Judges) was therefore 67,050*l*.

THE INCOME-TAX.—The following table shows the gross amount of property and profits assessed for income-tax, from the years 1843 to 1868, inclusive:—

Year ended 5th April.	England.	Scotland.	Ireland.	Great Britain.
1843	227,710,444 <i>l</i>	23,302,550 <i>l</i>	.....	251,013,003 <i>l</i>
1844	221,101,717	22,727,945	.....	243,829,662
1845	220,464,968	23,832,292	.....	244,297,260
1846	227,863,132	25,107,962	.....	252,971,094
1847	228,987,702	25,683,501	.....	254,671,203
1848	229,868,226	26,545,128	.....	256,413,354
1849	231,957,690	27,256,903	.....	259,214,593
1850	229,226,929	26,904,750	.....	256,131,750
1851	230,419,304	26,973,418	.....	257,392,723
1852	231,799,428	27,631,403	.....	259,430,831
1853	234,748,094	27,627,037	.....	262,375,131
United Kingdom.				
1854	256,333,899	30,551,204	21,397,068 <i>l</i>	308,282,191
1855	256,006,450	30,543,911	21,586,782	308,139,143
1856	255,864,265	30,166,479	21,390,446	307,421,190
1857	261,069,680	30,498,404	21,489,343	313,056,427
1858	274,724,847	29,558,899	22,855,106	327,138,852
1859	275,962,072	29,168,297	22,997,047	328,127,416
1860	282,312,309	29,913,124	22,662,885	334,888,318
1861	282,248,060	30,407,757	22,998,394	335,654,211
1862	295,894,976	32,252,691	23,597,574	351,745,241
1863	302,828,234	32,656,032	23,658,631	359,142,897
1864	313,639,959	33,706,047	23,756,836	371,102,842
1865	335,175,427	36,195,384	24,877,809	396,248,620
1866	350,277,476	37,616,391	25,211,313	413,015,180
1867	358,437,953	39,259,529	26,076,086	423,773,569
1868	365,306,419	38,933,455	26,069,397	430,309,271

MISCELLANEOUS.

LORD FALMOUTH has presented T. French, the rider of Kingcraft, the Derby winner, with the handsome *douceur* of 500*l*.

QUININE generally yields 80 per cent. of cures in cases of marsh fever. A new substance has been isolated from the leaves of box-wood which yields 75 per cent. of cures.

THE French Freemasons have resolved that for the present the office of Grand Master of the Order shall be in abeyance. The reason for this resolution is that neither General Molinier nor M. Carnot, one of whom it was desired to elevate to the dignity, will consent to serve.

THE COUNTY COURTS.—In the 23 years which have elapsed since the establishment of county courts in England, there have been above 15,000,000 plaintiffs entered for the recovery of sums amounting to nearly 39,000,000*l*. A large proportion of the cases are settled without further proceedings, but judgment was entered in 8,712,902 for sums amounting to 20,804,023*l*., exclusive of costs. Only 19,585 cases were tried by jury. The court fees have amounted to 3,581,708*l*. The average amount for which the plaintiffs were entered, was rather more than 50*l*.; in 1849, the average amount sued for per plaintiff was 63*l*.; in 1859 it was only 49*l*.; in 1869 it was 57*l*. A return relating to 1850 showed further details. Three-fifths of the suits commenced were for sums not exceeding 40*l*.; 55 in every 100 were tried, and more than half the causes tried were for sums not exceeding 40*l*. There are 59 county court circuits in England, besides the City of London Court. In 1869, 946,643 plaintiffs were entered, the sums claimed amounting to 2,692,073*l*. In that year the courts sat on 8,162 days, and determined 553,473 causes; judgment was given for sums amounting to 1,358,164*l*., besides 62,558*l*. costs, exclusive of fees. The total amount of court fees was 366,555*l*. Only 1,103 cases were tried by jury. 181,922 executions were issued against goods, and 4,962 sales were made; 9,759 debtors were imprisoned. These numbers include the City of London Court. Many additions have been made since the Act of 1846 to the jurisdiction of these courts, and much other work than that above stated was done in 1869. There were 4,931 adjudications in bankruptcy in the county courts; and the gross produce realised was 70,013*l*. There were 402 Admiralty suits or proceedings; 144 vessels were arrested, and 163 final decrees were made; the amount of claims was 40,733*l*. Proceedings were taken in 761 equitable suits or proceedings; 249 were for the administration of estates; 55 for the execution of trusts; 122 for foreclosure or redemption or enforcing a lien; 177 for specific performance; 64 for dissolution or winding-up of a partnership; 73 orders were made for the protection of the property of deserted wives. The county court did their share of work in 1869.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

F. A. B.—The lines are of insufficient merit.

W. E.—Your own mode of pronouncing the word in question is correct. The writing is very good, and suitable for any office.

LIVELY FRANK.—The tale of the "Mystery of the Black Diamond," accidentally omitted in No. 369, was resumed in No. 370.

A YOUTH (Bolton).—The handwriting is very good. The pretended revelations of spiritualists are the result either of mechanical appliances or the exertions of confederates.

GROSVENOR.—The tales are not published separately at present. We should endeavour to meet your views if they were shared by a majority of our readers.

L. K. Z.—We can only advise you to consult an oculist without further delay.

E. K. G.—Whitebait is said to be a fish peculiar to our river Thames. It is a distinct species, and does not grow large by the lapse of time. The method of cooking is to dip the fish in butter, and then to fry them in a pan with plenty of fat. The glories of Blackwall have vanished. Greenwich and Richmond are the places at which the fish is principally eaten.

M. A.—Miss Blandy was executed at Oxford for the murder of her father in April, 1753.

S. H. H. and Miss R. S.—Declined with thanks.

MAGGIE.—The warts should be first cleansed and stripped of any dead skin that may be about them, and then burnt by the application of lunar caustic.

A CONSTANT READER.—Notwithstanding the separation, you cannot marry again until your present marriage is dissolved by divorce or by the death of your wife.

Z.—Holograph wills are testamentary writings, entirely written and signed by the testator without witnesses. They are valid by the law of Scotland and France, but invalid by the law of England, which requires that a will shall be signed at the end by the testator, that such signature shall be made or acknowledged by the testator in the presence of two witnesses present at the same time, and that such witnesses shall attest and subscribe the will in the presence of the testator.

NEPTUNE.—There is an exception to the rule, as to the execution of wills in writing, in favour of soldiers and sailors. Any soldier in actual military service, or any mariner being at sea, may dispose of his personal estate by an oral will—that is to say, he can give verbal directions to his comrades as to the disposition of his personal property.

C. C. C.—It is expected that the development of the railway system in the United States, and the near approach of a line to the Utah territory will have considerable influence upon the tenets and position of the Mormons. They have occupied the above territory for about twenty years, and have existed as a sect for more than forty years.

S. M.—The legitimization of natural children by subsequent marriage has never been acknowledged by the law of England, but in Scotland the subsequent marriage of the parents confers upon a bastard the rights of a lawful child. The legitimization, however, only dates from the day of the marriage. The bastard, therefore, though the elder, could not, even by legitimization, defeat the claim of the child of the father's first wife born in wedlock.

MILLY.—The old bachelors have generally something to say for themselves, and are not so crusty nor so selfish as you are inclined to believe. How can you tell what blighted hopes are buried in their memories, or what tender passages of love are hidden in their experience? It is not in a man to complain: it is sufficient for him to endure; and he manages to do this with a tolerable amount of cheerfulness. With a good deal of sarcasm you ask us upon whom the greatest amount of pity should be bestowed—upon an old bachelor or an old maid? We are inclined to think that neither is in want of such barren sympathy; each is often found useful, very useful, to a married relation, and is able to rejoice heartily in a happiness of which it would have been glad to partake had not the fates otherwise decreed.

A YOUNG ARTIST.—The discrepancy in the date will be cleared up if you distinguish between Michael Angelo Buonarroti, who was born in 1474, and Michael Angelo da Caravaggio, who was born in 1593. They were not related, and though both are termed great painters, the first mentioned is the distinguished man to whom the title "incomparable" has been given. It was he who, by the command of Pope Paul III., painted a picture of the Last Judgment. Though he lived till 93, he died five

years before the second Michael Angelo was born. Michael Angelo was celebrated for his appreciation of anatomy, and was a great sculptor and architect, as well as a great painter. He took incredible pains to reach the perfection of his art. He loved solitude, and used to say "painting was jealous, and required the whole man to himself." Being asked "why he did not marry?" he answered, "Painting was his wife, and his works his children." The only work by this master exhibited at the Royal Academy in the commencement of this year, was an unfinished "Holy Family," which was lent by the trustees of the late Lord Taunton.

ENQUIRER.—You should take pure water as proposed without any ingredient. At your age tobacco and alcohol are injurious. You should endeavour to develop your muscular power by walking and boating exercise, and it will be for your advantage to join a cricket club if you have an opportunity. By these means your nerves will gain strength. Then you must summon resolution to your aid if you desire to pursue more serious studies. You will find the history of your own country replete with interest. It is, moreover, a branch of knowledge with which a young man in your position should be well acquainted. The handwriting is very good.

C. L. I.—The anecdote must bear the date of a much earlier period than that which you have assigned to it, for it is attributed to the celebrated Sir Thomas More. He propounded the question, "Whether beasts captured in Witherham are irrepleviable?" in reply to a continental savant of the day, who boasted of an ability to answer any question connected with any science or art. Although the question was perfectly fair, the learned boaster was posed, and escaped from his confusion by averring that the terms of the question were unintelligible, a statement inconsistent with the fact. The question was put in the Latin language.

TEMPORA MUTANTUR.

"The times are changed!"—long, long ago,
A Roman graybeard sighed;
"And still, as seasons wax and wane,
We change with time and tide."
And I (alas! that I must own)
My locks are growing scunter!

In pensive retrospect repeat,
O tempora mutantur!
Where now are all the village belles
I sonneted of yore?
Gone—with the fashion of the boots
And bonnets which they wore;
Their dimpled cheeks are wrinkled now,
And Time—the Disenchantor!—
Has dimmed the eyes that dazzled mine—
O tempora mutantur!

Oh, how we raved of Constance,
Melinda May and I!
I've quite forgotten which was first
To break the tender tie;
I know that I survived the shock,
(Though sworn to die instantly!)
And 'Linda lived—to love again—
O tempora mutantur!

Good Dr. Proser, where is he?
Whose logic clear and strong
The vestry praised—nor ever deemed
The sermon over-long—
Until they heard, and quite preferred
The Reverend Rousing Kanter;
To whom succeeded Rancor Prim—
O tempora mutantur!

Yes, times are changed; but one can dine,
And Mag's the best of cooks.
"No dinner?" John!—"Sir, if you please,
Mag's gone to 'go for Snooks!"
And wife?—"She's gone along with Mag."
John! bring me that decanter!—
By Jove! I'll go and vote for Jones!
O tempora mutantur! J. G. S.

Y. O. A.—We can only give you the prevailing opinion on the subject; for a practical remedy you must consult a medical man. Water on the brain is a much less frequent disease with children in these times than it was years ago, when the cause of the malady was not understood. The brain suffers entirely in consequence of its sympathy with other organs.

A COUNTRY GIRL.—So you want to destroy the crickets. There is one chirruping away as we write, and very glad are we to have a companion so harmless and cheerful while we are poring over our correspondence. Evidently you don't sympathize with those continental folk who are eager to retain the *Gryllus domesticus* in a cage in order that they may be frequently calisthened by the "creo-creo" produced by the friction of its wing-cases against each other. There he's at it again, pleading with us for his brethren, and consigning you to, let us say, Elysium. But we have a duty to perform in accordance with our rule, that information be furnished to all correspondents. Well, strew some plaster of Paris, powdered and mixed with oatmeal, near his haunts; and—take care that nothing happens to you, as you do this dreadful deed!

ESTHER.—Meteoric stones are what are popularly termed "shooting-stars." Scientific men some time were sceptical as to their existence. All doubt on the subject has long since been removed, and numerous specimens have been collected, weighing from one pound, and less, to two hundred-weight and upwards. They have fallen in all climates and in all parts of the world, and if taken up soon after their fall are extremely hot. Their form is usually pyramidal with rounded angles, the surface being coated with a black substance similar to varnish. Wherever they have been found their composition is similar, and consists of a collection of small spherical bodies of a gray colour imbedded in a gritty substance in which yellow spots sometimes are seen. Iron is found in them in large proportions; they contain also sulphur, magnesia, silica, and nickel. It is the general opinion that these meteoric stones are distinct bodies of matter moving round the earth in eccentric orbits, and that they become

ignited by the immense velocity with which they pass through the upper region of the atmosphere. To your second question, yes; apply at that department of the General Post-office. Applicants must have received competent tuition.

S. N. T.—We consider that you have lost your wagger. The months of July and August are hotter than the month of June, although it is true that the sun sheds most heat upon our portion of the earth in June. This is accounted for by the cumulative influence of heat. The earth receives in July and August an addition to that heat by which it was saturated in June, the effect of which has not passed away. This is in accordance with a well-known principle, that the effect of a force continues for a short time after the motive power has subsided. As a further illustration, take the fact that about mid-day the heat is felt most between one and two o'clock, whereas the sun's rays are most powerful at twelve.

LILY and BLUEBELL.—"Lily," nineteen, tall, fair, blue eyes, good teeth. Respondent must be tall and dark. "Bluebell," twenty-eight, middle height, dark, and a good figure. Respondent should be about forty, and fair.

FULL-BLOWN ROSE, nineteen, 5ft. 6in., fair, large blue eyes, golden curls, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, dark, and in good circumstances.

STYLIA, tall, fair hair, black eyes, amiable, fond of home, accomplished, and with an income of 300*l.* per annum.

W. H., twenty-one, tall, handsome, and with a good income. Respondent should have private means of her own, and be about his own age.

ALFRED, twenty, tall, dark, handsome, with a moustache and a good income. Respondent must be pretty, with blue eyes.

LITTLE PET, nineteen, medium height, dark, good looking, and accomplished; will have 500*l.* when of age. Respondent must be tall, fair, and fond of home; a tradesman preferred.

MELROSE, twenty-eight, tall, fair, whiskers and moustache; income, 150*l.* Respondent must have a small income, be domesticated, and slightly accomplished.

BOB THE BOWMAN (in the R.N.), twenty-one, dark, tall, and handsome. Respondent must be dark, tall, handsome, and about his own age.

J. P., thirty-four, 5ft. 10in., very fair complexion, colour-sergeant in the army, widower with two little girls, a testotoler, with 16 years' service, and a very comfortable home. Respondent must be fond of home and children, and between twenty-two and thirty.

VIRGIL, twenty-three, medium height, a lonesome bard, fair complexion, light blue eyes, cheerful, good tempered, and affectionate. Respondent must be amiable, vivacious, loving, and constant.

WALTER, twenty-eight, 5ft. 10in., light hair, holding a situation in an iron foundry. The lady must be a member of the Church of England, well up in all household duties, and about twenty-three years of age.

WILLIE and HARRY.—"Willie," twenty-one, tall, fair, good tempered, fond of music, and in business. Respondent must be affectionate, well educated, and domesticated, with a good income. "Harry," twenty, dark, fond of home, and in business. Respondent must be a good musician, and domesticated, with an income.

BLUE JACKIE, twenty-eight, 5ft. 7in., fair complexion. Respondent must be dark, and about twenty years of age.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

WALTER is responded to by—"Annie B.," fair, short blue eyes, wears her hair in curls, fond of music, good tempered, and domesticated; and—"C. B.," cheerful and domesticated.

LOTTIE R. by—"W. N." (seaman, R.N.), twenty-one, Auburn hair, hazel eyes, cheerful, and loving;—"Horace H.," twenty-two, dark, tall, with a good income; and—"Arthur F.," nineteen, tall, fair, and in a good position.

HARRY by—"Annie Rose," dark, good tempered, loving, domesticated, and of good family;—"R. F.," cheerful, domesticated, and would like an interview; and—"Annie," twenty, 5ft. 4in., dark brown hair and eyebrows, gray eyes, domesticated, affectionate, and well connected.

BILL BRACE by—"Marguerite," seventeen, tall, Auburn hair, blonde complexion, and dark blue eyes;—"Ethel V.," tall, fair, good looking, and fond of home; and—"Follie," fair, well educated, musical, fond of home, and has a little money.

JIB HALTARDS by—"Violet," eighteen, 5ft. 4in., dark hair, dark complexion, and blue eyes;—"Birdie," fair, well educated, musical, fond of home, and has a little money.

WILLIAM and JAMES by—"Minnie and Seal." Minnie, tall, fair, musical, domesticated, and of a good family. Seal, medium height, fair, good business habits, loving, and has a little money of her own.

TOM CLEWLINE and HARRY RATTLIN by—"Carlotta and Nellie." Carlotta prefers Harry; as he is dark, good looking, loving, and fond of home. Nellie is dark, loving, and has hazel eyes.

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